

# ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

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Journal of the Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR

# Editor's Notebook

## MOSCOW - TBILISI - LENINGRAD

H. Campbell Creighton

SO MANY visitors to the Soviet Union pour out their thoughts in lengthy 'interpretative' articles in the Sunday press—not to mention the dailies, weeklies and monthlies—that one hesitates to write about one's own visit. But perhaps the editor of a quarterly devoted to Anglo-Soviet cultural relations may be excused if he puts some of his impressions on paper. In extenuation it can be said that it does not happen with monotonous regularity.

This visit lasted nearly five weeks—which gives one at least three times the period of observation that many an author of a book about the USSR has had. It embraced Moscow, Sochi, Tbilisi and Leningrad, and somehow five weeks allowed no more than three days in each of the last two. Moscow eats up one's time like a voracious, but ever so friendly, St. Bernard dog.

As always, I left London with well-laid plans to visit this place and that, and to see such and such people, etc. As always—to one's momentary frustration and frenzy—they went aghay. And as always the unplanned events were fascinating and full of pleasant surprises—like the lovely open-air Alpine restaurant up in the Caucasus, where we dined with Georgian friends amid scenery breath-taking in its beauty.

## AWAY FROM SPRING

JET AIRCRAFT are quick, but there's little pleasure in the journey—a whistle and you're up; a few minutes or hours and another whistle, and you're down. Nothing in between except the sunshine on billowing cottonwool. The prospect of even faster, supersonic flight may thrill the engineers, but it holds little pleasure for this traveller. The jets haven't even the virtue of comfort—little headroom, no leg room, as cramped as a long-distance coach. For all the glamour of streamlined hostesses and solicitous stewards, they're only glorified buses. In the USSR the public treat them more and more as such; but more of that later.

The trip to the USSR by train is more comfortable and more interesting. When European railways remodel their long-distance trains and carriages to give them something of the convenience of North American trains, and cut the travelling time with quicker schedules, they could easily compete with the international airlines at the present level of air fares.

Spring was late in England, and the daffodils were only in bud when we left. As the train went east, spring fell farther and farther behind. In Poland it was just arriving. The snow had gone; the fields and the trees had that bare look so characteristic of the season in a snowy climate; peasants were busy ploughing and tidying up after the ravages of winter. In Brest, at midnight, it was cold and frosty; and next morning, crossing Byelorussia, it was again winter. Rivers and ponds were still frozen, with only signs of the impending spring break-up.

It is a dull, even dreary, landscape—mile upon mile devoid of trees and people, desolate and immense. One recalls cruel facts—even fifteen years after the expulsion of the Nazi armies Byelorussia had fewer people than it had on the eve of war, and not just fewer men, but fewer women also. In the Smolensk



country one remembers an ever-recurring theme of Russian novels—how the gentry paid for their extravagances by selling another forest. Down the Dnieper went the logs, leaving behind a devastation as complete as that wreaked by the logging companies in America. The merchants of Odessa grew rich; the country behind became an eroded wilderness of scrub, still awaiting afforestation or proper clearing and settlement.

It is not all wilderness, of course. From time to time one sees a village, or a huddle of hamlets, or the central buildings of a collective farm, with long tracks and ski trails converging on it across the snow-covered fields. One thing about the villages caught my eye, in contrast to Poland: the number of bird-houses. I knew how Soviet children are encouraged to make nesting boxes and put them up around their schools and homes; it is a regular activity of schools and the Pioneers. Here was the result—scarcely a yard with less than three bird boxes, and often more, perched on the roof-beam, nailed to tall poles, fixed in the fruit trees. I don't remember ever seeing so many anywhere. Bird-watching may not be the pastime in the USSR that it is in Britain, but the people obviously like their summer mornings to be heralded by bird-song.

The nearer we got to Moscow the deeper was the snow. As we arrived there were clear signs of a fall only the night before. The snow-clearing machines were working full sweep in the city, and in no time the main streets were clear, and buses, lorries and taxis raced along the bare asphalt. But we were back in winter; and a shudder went down our backs.

How different this 'winter' was! The buildings were warm, draughts almost unknown. There was sunshine, and the invigorating frost of a continental climate. Our friends were not as indulgent as us towards this fag-end of a long winter. They had had enough and could no longer enjoy it, and were longing for spring and summer. Whenever we said we were going south to Sochi and Georgia we were the envy of the company. But in fact Sochi was not warm, and by the end of April spring had arrived with a summer flush, and Moscow basked in heat.

## HAIRDRESSERS

**S**HORTLY BEFORE I left London, Jaquetta Hawkes had written a full-page account for a Sunday paper of her visit a few months earlier with her husband, J. B. Priestley. One thing she said had struck me and rankled in my memory. Mrs. Priestley, it seems, couldn't find a hairdresser's in all the Soviet Union, except in Tashkent, where—she said—she got a poor wash and set. Pointing out hairdressers to my wife became an obsession. At first it was amusing, after a few days it became somewhat boring for my wife, and at the end of two weeks—as the score mounted daily—it ceased to be funny. Only the perplexing puzzle remained: how could an archaeologist (not without claims as an anthropologist)—presumably more observant by training than the run-of-the-mill traveller—write such nonsense? Was she looking for a sign nicely lettered 'Hair Stylist' in English? Or couldn't she penetrate behind the Cyrillic and the eighteenth-century flavour of *parikmakherskaya* to recognise a hairdresser's (and not a wigmaker's)?

My wife did penetrate the mystery and had a shampoo and set in Moscow and in Sochi. Nor was she dissatisfied with the results. As for the longer effects, she was more than pleased. We have added a new item to a growing list of mysteries. Why does a Soviet hair-do last so long (or keep so well)? We've compared notes with Soviet women, and there seems to be something in it—a Soviet set is of better quality than a suburban English one.

## PALACE OF WONDERS

THE LAST time I visited Moscow I was 'captured' by playwrights and producers, and spent almost every night at the theatre. One of the memorable occasions was a visit backstage at the new building of the Mossoviet Theatre. It was expected at that time that an English company coming out under the Anglo-Soviet cultural agreement would present its programme in this theatre, which was the first new post-war one in Moscow and had only recently been opened. In the end the British company did not play there—more's the pity. I have been backstage where they played in London, and no contrast could have been greater. Equity and the profession have time and again exposed the conditions in which actors are expected to dress for their parts. How they manage is one of the Pygmalion miracles of the London theatre. In front of the footlights they are artists—behind, stage slum dwellers.

In contrast the Mossoviet dressing rooms seemed palatial: single dressing rooms for the principals, and shared ones (never more than four together) for the rest, fitted out with all the comfort of a hotel room (wash-basins, lavatories, baths). The several floors were reached by lift, and wide corridors, fitted with soft carpets and furnished as small lounges with comfortable easy chairs, led to the dressing rooms. Downstairs were a recreation room and a buffet for actors and stagehands, and the ubiquitous cloakroom.

On this visit I became the 'prisoner' of musicians, and spent much time at the Palace of Congresses in the Kremlin, the second stage of the Bolshoi Theatre. Time will settle whether the Palace fits; it's not a question I get heated about. The building itself is better than many whose presence within the Kremlin walls has only time to justify it. The Palace is fabulous, as fabulous as any of the Kremlin cathedrals with their wonderful onion domes. From the outside it is a box, a pleasing modern box, sitting flat on its bottom as a box should, and not up-ended like the blue matchboxes that have changed the London skyline. You enter the box on the long side through an open door (though there were several degrees of frost outside) and a curtain of hot air, and flow with the stream down an escalator into an enormous glass-walled chamber that turns out to be the cloakroom. All along one wall are racks to hold 6,000 overcoats, 6,000 hats and 6,000 pairs of overshoes. In no time you are divested of your outer garments and turn to find your way towards your part of the house, past hundreds of girls adjusting their dresses, putting their hair into place, etc., before enormous wall mirrors. Up another escalator to a foyer (not ours); up another escalator. (If you like, of course, you can walk up the white marble staircase behind the glass of the façade.) On each floor are people clustered around kiosks selling sweets and programmes. Somewhere on the way up there is a winter garden with a view over the Kremlin.

If you continue up all the escalators you come to an enormous banqueting hall, big enough to seat 2,500 diners, with its own stage for concerts for the guests. When the palace is being used by the Bolshoi Theatre this is the buffet. Not all the 6,000 audience that nightly attends the shows comes up here for refreshment, for there are other buffets on the floors below. But over half do come up, and are served in no time at all: firstly because the whole thing is laid out to give the quickest possible access; and secondly because you serve yourself to everything except ice cream, whipped cream, and a few other dishes. You want tea with lemon—there's the pot, there are the glasses, there the lemons and sugar. Help yourself. And there's a box for the money. How much? You look hard and can't see the price; a passing waitress, replenishing supplies, will tell you. Or perhaps you want coffee. The same; pour your own. Beer? Over there is a big table loaded with bottles and glasses and supplied with openers; and over yonder is another. Soft drinks? The same. Champagne?



They'll pour you a glass at the counter. You eat or drink, or both, in comfort. There's plenty of time to talk over the previous act, and room to promenade. You can raise your cup without knocking your neighbour or having your elbow jogged. It's all so leisurely and civilised—coffee in the interval is the pleasure it ought to be, and not a frantic scramble for the head of the queues.

There are close resemblances between the Palace and the Festival Hall. The influence of the latter is obvious in many features—the staircase, the design and furnishings of the concert hall. It is to be hoped that when the rebuilding on South Bank is finished there will be further resemblances, and two in particular: in refreshment facilities for the intervals, and backstage accommodation for artists and musicians.

It is this accommodation for the artists that makes the Palace of Congresses truly fabulous, not its 6,000-seat concert hall, not its acoustic system, not its foyers and buffets. If the Mossoviet Theatre resembles a high-class hotel compared, for example, with Sadler's Wells or the Old Vic, the Palace is the height of luxury. On seven floors are disposed single and double dressing rooms for over 300 artists, each equipped with dressing tables, wash-basins, toilet, shower bath, and a divan. For each set of two there is a bathroom. At the end of each corridor—with soft, sound-deadening carpets—there is a make-up room with four to six chairs, with a staff of make-up artists and hairdressers. On every floor, at strategic places, there is a closed-circuit television set showing what is happening on stage. Lounges, buffets, etc., are a matter of course. Swift automatic lifts serve all floors. If any actor or member of an orchestra reading this breathes 'Paradise on earth', he's right.

## MUSIC LESSONS

OUR MUSICAL programme included everything (with one important exception: there was no concert by Svyatoslav Richter)—opera, ballet, folk song and dance, vocal and instrumental concerts and recitals, conservatories, music schools, 'Johnnie, please play for the guests', and Georgian table singing. There is not the space to comment on the opera singing (adversely), or to go into details of the whole system of musical education (admirable). Dr. Ruth Railton and Yehudi Menuhin have been so impressed by it that they are founding a school to be modelled on the lines of the Central Music School in Moscow, and have made a detailed study of its curriculum and syllabus.\* That is for gifted children. Here I want only to say something about the provision made for the ordinary child.

The private music teacher with her little circle of pupils still thrives in the Soviet Union, but more as a coach—even a crammer—for little Ivans and Natashas whose parents want them to pass the audition for a children's music school. These are part-time schools, attended voluntarily (or by parental compulsion) after normal school lessons at the general school, and providing a seven-year course from the age of seven to nine in piano, harp, violin, viola, 'cello, balalaika, guitar and accordion, or five years in brass and woodwind—except oboe and bassoon. They are fast becoming the standard means of providing 'music lessons'. At present there are some 2,000 of these schools in the RSFSR alone, with more than 300,000 pupils. The aim is to open 150 to 200 more each year, the main limiting factor being not money, as we so often experience, but the supply of trained teachers. Each borough of Moscow has at least one such school, and the ideal towards which they are working is one for each neighbourhood unit of some 10,000 population.

The children's music schools have a large staff of devoted teachers, none of

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\* We shall be publishing notes about Soviet musical education and this school shortly in a bulletin of the SCR Information Library.

whom has more than a dozen pupils, whom she takes for two forty-minute lessons each week. Talented children are sent up, as they appear, for audition at the Central Music School or for the entrance examination of the Conservatory, and the teachers are concerned only with future amateur musicians. The standards are high, much higher than the private teacher here can normally afford to demand. The entrance examination is stiff, and so is the competition for a place. Exams are held each spring to decide whether a pupil will be kept for a further year; it gives child and parents as much concern as the eleven-plus and 'O' level do us.

After the exams comes the school concert; and after the school concert comes the city one for the best pupils of each school. This lasts several days, and was being held just before May Day when we were in Moscow. As would be expected, the soloists were best; the ensemble playing of the various quartets, chamber groups and orchestras was not up to their standard. We also had an opportunity to hear a couple of pupils play at home, one a child who had taken lessons in London before entering the school. She was now a few years older, of course, but her progress in technique, strength of fingers, and sense of time and rhythm was greater than the mere passage of time would account for. Most had come from the sheer hard work she had to put in to stay on at the music school; she was expected—in addition to two hours' work a week at the school—to practise not less than one hour a day—sometimes she did.

The pupils do two or three times as much work in a week as the pupils of the ordinary private teacher in England. And the tuition—which would cost a London parent at least 30/- a week—is free, a point worth remembering when making comparisons of standards of living.

Musical appreciation is an essential element of the curriculum, the pieces to be learned being selected as much for their value in developing musical taste as for furthering technique. It is interesting to speculate what kind of an audience will come into being as these tens of thousands of children complete their seven-year training and become the concert-goers of tomorrow.

## OH, TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE !

FROM SNOWY MOSCOW, suffering the last storms of winter, to Sochi—balmy and wet—took only a few hours by TU-104. Cloud obscured the Caucasus and no flight could have been duller. But there is never a dull moment on the drive from Adler Airport to Sochi proper. The road bends and twists along the Black Sea coast, suspended half-way up slopes that seem to fall sheer away to the sea—a dubious joy to a driver, certain hell for his passengers.

Sochi is often referred to as the Brighton of the USSR because of its importance as a seaside holiday resort, but no place less like Brighton could be imagined. They do have one thing in common, however—their stoney beaches.

Greater Sochi, as this area now is, is a town nearly 100 miles long, seldom wider than two or three miles at its thickest nodes, and strung at intervals in draws and valleys along the coast road that runs from Tuapse to the Georgian border. It has a permanent population of 200,000; and while it does have industries (including a plastics factory turning out really attractive ware) its main business is health. Sanatoria, rest homes and treatment centres dominate the town, temples to the balneological fetish whose main rites are celebrated at Matsesta. The real possibilities of Sochi for active rest and recreation are now being realised, and a massive building programme of hotels, youth hostels, camp sites and flats for the local residents is slowly changing the appearance and character of the various beads on the string. A new stadium is under construction. The international youth centre is being enlarged. The town is an ideal training centre for sportsmen. Hundreds of cyclists had taken it over in April

—the hills and curves provide gruelling practice for the toughest races. Young people, too, are starting to make the most of the Caucasian foothills for walking and hiking. An Olympic-size swimming pool was just completed in the grounds of the sanatorium where I stayed, and was filled for the first time the day I left.

It is often claimed that only Britain has weather, and all else climate. These insular boasters can never, of course, have heard of Sochi, or they might amend their statement to make an exception for it. For Sochi too has 'weather', and we got the full benefit of it—a late spring as wet as the west of England, balmy when the sun shone, miserable when fog and mist and rain came down. Envious friends in Moscow envisaged us basking in warmth, even bathing in the sea, while we toured the Sochi Dendrium in a drizzle just for the exercise! Our fellow resters bore it all with stoic calm and Russian humour. Meals were served on the English pattern—breakfast, lunch, tea and supper. No gong sounded the call to arms, but tables filled rapidly at the advertised meal times. 'Going to work' was the house slang for it: pleasant work it was too.

## MOUNTAIN JEWEL

A TRIP to Lake Ritsa is obligatory for anyone staying in Sochi. The long drive is worth every hair-raising inch of the way to this jewel of a mountain lake. Heavy road work is in progress this year to widen the road and make it easier for the motor coaches that bring up holiday-makers from Sochi, Gagra and Pitsunda. There is a hotel on the lakeside, and a seemingly inaccessible shashlik house, and at the far end the huddle of dachas where Stalin used to stay.

The lake has not yet become either a developed resort or a base for mountain climbing and walking. Anyone who wants an unspoiled place far from crowds should visit it while there is still time. Sooner or later, someone is going to realise that the uninhabited twenty-mile gorge up to Ritsa is just crying out for tourist huts on the Alpine model, and bases for hikers. The scenery is glorious, the peaks are inviting, the climbs and scrambles are neck-breaking.

## CROSSING THE FRONTIER

ON THE way to Gagra and Lake Ritsa you cross a bridge and enter Abkhazia. You soon become aware that you have crossed a frontier. It's not that the people dress noticeably differently; I looked in vain for one of those legendary centenarians in full mountaineer regalia. It's not just because the road signs are different—saying everything three times: once in Russian, once in curly Georgian, and once again with Cyrillic letters masking an equally puzzling language—Abkhazian.

No, it's the extra obstacles a driver must anticipate. In the RSFSR you only have to avoid coaches and lorries, cyclists, a few pedestrians, cars of all sorts, and an occasional dog on the hairpin bends and blind corners. In Abkhazia to all these are added straying donkeys, goats, calves, cows, bullocks, buffalo and pigs grazing by the side of the road, crossing from one verge to the other with supreme contempt for motor vehicles. Each householder, it would seem, has free grazing rights on the roadsides and makes the most of it.

Coming back into Russia you are again aware of the frontier—for you have to go through a quarantine post, presumably against foot and mouth disease. Cars are driven through a pan of disinfectant and passengers are expected to alight and wipe their feet in it, under the taciturn watch of a militiaman. Our Georgian driver seemed to think it all a bit of humbug. He argued manfully with the militiaman that his passengers were guests, but the word had no magic. We had to descend and give a token scrape of the feet before we could proceed.

After a couple of miles it dawned on me that the driver had won half his argument. While we had been performing the required rites he had remained stolidly behind his wheel, though his soles were as contaminated as ours.

## CLIMBING TO SUMMER

GEORGIA PROPER begins farther down the coast beyond Sukhumi. We flew from Sochi to Tbilisi in a good old steam-age piston plane that never went above 10,000 feet on the whole trip. It was just like a flying bus. Perhaps there's something there for BEA to consider. Internal air fares in the USSR are about the same as rail, and the baggage allowance is almost as generous—no stingy 44lb. Hostesses are dispensed with on short runs.

It's a marvellous flight. First a low hop from Adler to Sukhumi, flying out to sea to skirt the mountains at Gagra. Cloud may sometimes obscure the view, but on a fine day it is beautiful—and behind the Gagra Mountains glitter the main ranges of the Caucasus. At Sukhumi we set down passengers, picked up others, had a stroll in the airport gardens, and braved the public lavatories. Then up the valley between the Great Caucasus and the Little Caucasus to Kutaisi. On either side in the distance, glorious shining peaks that seemed to come in closer as we touched down to drop more passengers and pick up a full Sunday morning load for Tbilisi. There's the secret of these cheap flights—a load factor of at least seventy-five to eighty per cent. After Kutaisi the plane climbs higher, and so does the land below; and the view remains fascinating whether one looks northwards towards Elbruz and Mount Kavkas and the slopes where Prometheus suffered his torment, or south towards Armenia. Finally a large town spreads below as we bank and come in to land—Tbilisi.

Here is a city. Fifteen hundred years of history have moulded it. In the past thirty years it has grown enormously and become a metropolis, stretched out over twenty-five miles along the Kura and side valleys.

When I was last there the river was being embanked. It has since also been dammed to give Tbilisi a 'sea' and a water supply. Side streets that were unmade and muddy a decade ago have been surfaced. A new park has been laid out with sparkling fountains, and a hole has been blown in the surrounding hills to open a window for the city. A tall television tower and studio, with its own cable-car system, has joined the famous mountain restaurant at the top of the funicular railway on the mountain beyond the left bank of the river. And now an underground railway is being planned to solve the transport problem and link both ends of the city with the middle. But someone has also erected an immense statue to the Georgian mother on one of the hills. Perhaps it is a good statue; but it looks as out of place as those Virgins that disfigure so many beauty spots in France.

From the mountain top Tbilisi is a city of red roofs. On the ground, in the streets, it is a southern city, full of lovely southern women and handsome southern men. And though it is high up it is warm. With the increase in altitude we had expected it to be colder than Sochi; but quite the contrary. Spring was well established, and summer on its way; and for the first time for nearly twelve months I enjoyed a hot day.

A friend has said that he had found Tbilisi the Soviet city most like England. I don't think he meant it as a compliment. On the contrary, he hadn't liked a certain affluent resemblance he found to our society. Personally, I think the resemblance is superficial, arising from the impression of general prosperity the city gives, and the more stylish dress of the women, compared with Moscow. But perhaps he is right in thinking that this well-being has brought a sense of complacent satisfaction with the achievements of socialism and a blunting of the sense that there is anything more to be struggled for.

Statistics indicate that the Georgians are the best educated people in the USSR and its greatest theatre-goers. Three days are too short a time to check such figures, especially when two evenings are passed eating with friends and surviving the Georgian ordeal by wine. But the people we met gave an impression of wider cultural interests than Muscovites while being no less erudite or expert in their own fields. This is possibly true of other republics as well, where the smaller population makes it impossible to produce journals devoted to one art or field, and promotes the publication of general cultural magazines catering for all the arts, which counters the compartmentalism so often apparent among Moscow intellectuals.

The Georgians are proud of their history. They are as knowledgeable about their old churches as any English brass rubber. Like us, they have their Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings—to the envy of Russian architects, who are contemplating founding one on the Georgian model. Their ballet is very alive and drawing inspiration from their virile folk dances; Vakhtang Chabukiani has probably choreographed more full-length ballets in the past decade in Tbilisi than all the choreographers of the Bolshoi and Kirov theatres taken together.

One thing the Georgians don't seem yet to worry about—the terrible erosion eating away their hills, filling the beds of the rivers with gravel, and covering the Georgian Military Highway with shingle whenever a mountain torrent sweeps across it into the river below. Overgrazing appears to be the cause. The sheep had already cropped the spring grass so short by the end of April that some of the lower slopes were nearly denuded of cover. I saw no signs of anti-erosion measures out in the country, but in Tbilisi itself some steps were being taken to reclaim eroded ravines.

## SCHOOL OF DESIGN

FROM TBILISI to Leningrad and back to winter, with a chill caught in the Georgian mountains taking the edge off one's enjoyment. In Leningrad I am hopelessly lost, even in the architectural museum of the centre, with all those great streets converging on the Admiralty. The city just refuses to fall into shape, in my mind.

A rich creative life pulses in Leningrad's theatres and schools, among its architects and scientists. And this life survives the pull that draws so many talented people off sooner or later to Moscow. Yet I find it hard to get a feel of it. The centre is so unchanging that nothing seems to change, while all Moscow is in a state of physical flux. Yet it is really easier to see what is new in Soviet life in Leningrad than in Moscow. In Leningrad, for example, one can see all the various phases of post-war town planning much more clearly than in Moscow—the immediate post-war main thoroughfare approach with its mammoth blocks of flats lining miles of street; the transition to block planning, building up the area enclosed by four main thoroughfares; and now the microdistrict or neighbourhood unit. Moscow, of course, went through the same process, but the areas affected are more scattered and less easy to pick out. Leningrad, too, seems to be ahead of Moscow in the internal planning of flats and the provision of accommodation for single people, but no nearer, however, to solving the problem of giving large-panel buildings an attractive exterior.

Unfortunately, I have space only for a word about an institution in Leningrad that has interested me for several years, and which I was very glad to be able to visit. That is the Mukhina Higher School of Industrial Design, to anglicise its name. Here and there in a friend's house in the Soviet Union you find some really attractive things—ceramics, plastics, furnishing materials—that you'll never see in GUM, or the gift shop on Gorky Street, or any of the other shops that tourists go to in Moscow. (That is one of the absurd anomalies of Moscow—



the foreigner expects the best shops to be in the centre, when in fact they are out in such places as the Frunze Embankment, Lenin Prospect, or Kutuzov Prospect). One of the sources for these attractive things is the Mukhina School. Here, in an old palace ill adapted in many ways to its work, the shape of things to come is being born. Here designers for textile mills, furniture factories, potteries and glassworks are being trained, and design engineers for machine-tool factories, motor works, shipyards, etc. Samples of the best work of students are permanently on show in the school museum. They have been designing lovely things—sensible children's furniture, amusing toys, chunky costume jewellery with Scythian inspiration, attractive tea and coffee sets, graceful glasses, carafes and vases, curtains, upholstery fabrics, carpets. Small runs are produced by the students in the school workshops and sold through a special shop in Leningrad. Industry is still slow in taking up their designs and putting them into mass production, but these young men and women are going into the factories and will sooner or later be affecting the look of their products.

The school also has a faculty of monumental art—sculpture, mosaics, frescoes. Some of the work I saw in this section might have been done in quite another place, so uninteresting and old-fashioned did it seem in comparison with the interior furnishings, glass and ceramics.

Around the big hall of the school are plaques with portraits of great artists of the past, both Russian and foreign. One face, however, was missing which I thought ought to have been there—that of William Morris. I hope that following the rector's recent visit to Britain it soon will be added.

As a tailpiece, a little story about the language barrier. I had been trying to find out from the rector, Jacob Lukin, an impressive, dynamic man, what was the syllabus for the course in æsthetics, what works the students were expected to read. Among other things I wanted to find out if Morris's views were studied. However, we made heavy going of what seemed a fairly straightforward matter, and I failed to get my answer. But the rector promised he would send me a copy of the syllabus. He was as good as his word, and just before I left Leningrad a packet was delivered to my hotel. I opened it eagerly, to find inside—taken specially from the school library—a copy of the syllabus on Marxist-Leninist ethics!

## THE POTEMKIN MYTH

WHEN H. G. WELLS visited Soviet Russia in the early 'twenties, he persuaded himself that everything good he was shown had been laid on specially for his benefit.\* In his day Bernard Shaw was castigated for not taking the same attitude. And the myth has been continuously touted that every little Intourist guide, every interpreter or official from the Ministry of Education, the USSR—Great Britain Society, or what have you, is a reincarnation of Prince Potemkin. Perhaps it is self-flattering for the tourist to feel that he or she is another Catherine the Great to be deceived at every inch of the journey.

Shortly after my return from the USSR I came across yet another dismissal of what is seen in the USSR as dressed up—this time from the pen of Mr. Donald Hutchings. Reviewing *Communist Education* (edited by Edmund J. King)† in *New Scientist* (May 30, 1963), Mr. Hutchings began with the following paragraph:

‘The authors of this account of education on the other side of the iron and bamboo curtains have set themselves a difficult assignment. Visitors' movements are still restricted to those places where greatest advances have been made. There is also a strong impression that even in those cities only the best is ever offered for inspection. One hears only of achieve-

\* Vide A.S.J., Vol. XXI, No. 1 (Spring), 1960, p. 10, by Kornei Chukovsky.

† See p. 53 of this issue for a review by Mrs. C. E. Simmonds.



ments; never of difficulties or of failures. Dr. King and his collaborators have had to base themselves on such observations as they were able to make during visits to communist countries and on such documentary evidence as official sources have chosen to release.'

How ominous he makes it sound! And how difficult for the poor innocent western educationist dependent only on his own powers of observation!

Mr. Hutchings also reviewed the book for *New Scientist's* sister journal *New Society* (July 4, 1963). Again he included a paragraph throwing doubt on the possibility of knowing anything about education in the USSR, as if there were a sort of uncertainty principle affecting such study. This time he said:

'An increasing number of educationists visit the Soviet Union each year. However, movements are still restricted to those places where the greatest advances have been made and there is a strong impression that even in these cities only the best is offered for inspection. One hears only of achievements and never of difficulties or failures. All publications treating of education in the USSR are ultimately governmental.'

Since two editors have considered Mr. Hutchings sufficiently an expert to let him review Dr. King's book, it is worth examining his paragraphs more closely.

First the restriction of visitors' movements. It is true, of course, that tourists are only able to visit those places on the Intourist itineraries—but this includes at least two dozen cities as widely separated as Riga and Khabarovsk (almost literally 10,000 miles away!), and Leningrad and Ashkhabad. Every capital of fifteen republics is available, and such small provincial cities as Novgorod, Vladimir, Bokhara and Sukhumi. But not all visiting educationists are restricted to the Intourist itineraries; and visits have been made, for example, to schools in areas as remote as the autonomous republics of the Middle Volga.

But most educationists do only visit Moscow, Leningrad and one other city. As anyone who has advised the organisers of study groups knows, it is hard to persuade them to do otherwise. We congratulate the tour from the Bristol University Institute of Education that recently visited only Georgia and Armenia, resolutely by-passing Moscow; Soviet educational statistics indicate that Georgia and Armenia are the areas of greatest advance in terms of numbers with secondary and higher education per 10,000 of population. Students of the Soviet educational press know that interesting experiments have been taking place in the Ukraine. They also know that the name on every Russian educationist's tongue is Lipetsk (an off-the-beaten-track steel city in central Russia), whose methods of active teaching are being assiduously popularised and studied all over the RSFSR (and in other republics).

Personally, I usually visit institutions that I have selected myself—on this trip Moscow Conservatory, Tbilisi Conservatory, the Tbilisi Ballet School, the Herzen Pedagogical Institute in Leningrad, the Mukhina Higher School of Industrial Design. The Moscow Conservatory is without doubt a show place—a Mecca for musicians—on the basis of its reputation, of the great musicians who have taught and studied there, of its pre-eminence in world musical education.

Tbilisi Conservatory is not a show place in respect either of its buildings or its reputation, but it is the centre of an interesting national school of music, is one of the four leading conservatories of the USSR, and has a most promising lot of young performers coming along. Is one blind when one visits an institution like this? Utterly dependent on the interpreter? With no yardstick by which to judge anything? Of course not. Even the visitor with no Russian (or Georgian) is not helpless. You don't have to know a syllable of the language to judge the playing of a pianist or the work of a teacher if you have any professional knowledge. And one has the yardstick of the Royal Schools in London

and of other institutions visited. The inquiring visitor also checks the information given at one institution at another, and compares notes when possible with other visitors.

I have given details about the Herzen Institute in another article.\* Here I only want to say that this visit was made precisely in order to check published facts, and to call on lecturers known to me personally for several years. It is a 'show place' only in the sense that it is an established, leading institution.

My visit to the Moscow City Institute for Teachers' Refresher Courses (to give it an English title that conveys its function) was not one of my asking, however; it was laid on to attend the official opening of an exhibition on the teaching of mathematics in Great Britain that had been prepared by the College of Preceptors and the Association of Teachers of Mathematics and sent to the USSR by the Society for Cultural Relations. The exhibition showed the best and most advanced in British teaching methods, has been seen by thousands of Soviet teachers and has aroused great interest. Speaking at the opening the Deputy Minister of Education of the RSFSR, Professor A. Markushevich, himself an eminent mathematician, said that the Soviet teachers had learned a great deal from it in the way of new ideas for their work and in how to tell others about their own methods. If he and his colleagues at the Ministry had seen it before preparing their own exhibition shown in Britain two years ago, he said, they would have sent rather a different one. An admission of failure? Or of a mistake? Naturally, I took the opportunity to study the Institute—in particular as I had been wanting to visit this type of institution, having read something of their work, especially of that in Kazan. The building was a fairly recent one, but not distinguished in style or layout. It was a crowded hive of active educational propaganda—disseminating new ideas, retraining teachers and heads of schools, popularising improved methods.†

It is ridiculous of Mr. Hutchings to say that one hears only of achievements and never of difficulties or failures. One has discussed them too often to accept such a statement. What are facts about two-shift working of schools? An achievement? What are admissions that more active teaching methods are needed in the classroom? What are the so-called Khrushchov reforms but a criticism of shortcomings in the old school set-up? And the new approach to modern language teaching? Superficial propaganda pamphlets speak mainly of what are thought to be achievements; and some guides and interpreters are naïve enough to do the same, even to deny that there are difficulties. But the educationist who is entirely dependent on such 'information' has no business to be touring Soviet schools or to write about them afterwards.

The person on a study tour has to do some homework, preferably before going, certainly after returning. There is an enormous amount of material in English at his disposal. The *SCR Education Bulletins* alone show that there is constant discussion and criticism in the USSR of its education system, that it is all the time being changed to overcome difficulties, shortcomings and deficiencies. And there are, of course, plenty of hostile accounts that dwell at length on drawbacks real and imagined (and even these contain much creditable evidence of achievements). So there is no need or excuse to depend solely on eulogies.

As a matter of fact, some of the contributors to *Communist Education* know Russian and used published material in the language. Which brings one to Hutchings's last and most stupid point: that 'all publications treating of education in the USSR are ultimately governmental', and that only 'such documentary evidence as official sources have chosen to release' is available.

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\* See *SCR Soviet Information Library Bulletin* No. 4, 1963.

† See *SCR Soviet Information Library Bulletin* No. 4, 1963.

Mr. Hutchings must have the most confused ideas about the political organisation of the Soviet Union. Firstly, the USSR has a many-tiered system of government, with great scope for initiative in the lower echelons. The Institute for Refresher Courses referred to above, for example, comes under the education department of the Moscow City Council, and has its own press, publishing material for Moscow teachers. It does not need the prior approval of the Ministry. Each republic has its own Ministry of Education for elementary and secondary education, with its own press, textbooks and publications. There is no overall ministry for the USSR. Some republics follow the example of the RSFSR closely and the ideas of its Academy of Educational Sciences; others develop their own individual approach, particularly in the Ukraine. Then there are the Republican Ministries of Higher and Specialised Secondary Education, quite separate, and their overall USSR Ministry. In addition there are the bodies concerned with vocational education and trade training, not to speak of the adult educational activities of the Ministries of Culture.

There are also non-governmental bodies like the Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge, a main avenue of adult education, which has active pedagogical and youth sections concerned with problems of education. There is, too, the Educational and Scientific Workers' Trade Union, the only body actually uniting people in all fields of education and research, which publishes the *Teachers' Gazette* jointly with the Ministries of Education. Newspapers like *Literary Gazette* (published by the Union of Writers) and *Izvestia* (the newspaper of the Supreme Soviet—parliamentary, not governmental) follow education closely and publish critical material that is far from what the 'official sources' in the education ministries would 'choose to release'. *Literary Gazette*, for example, made the running in the return to co-education. During the spring of this year members of the Academy of Sciences and the rectors of a number of universities discussed in *Izvestia* problems of the selection of students for higher education, the training of teachers for secondary schools, the standard of school teaching of mathematics and science (concern was expressed at the decline in mathematics teaching—due to the greater attraction of research and industry for university-trained mathematicians), the immediate post-war neglect of cybernetics and consequent falling behind in the building of computers. No more scathing comment has been made anywhere than the remark of Academician Lavrentiev (Vice-President of the USSR Academy of Sciences, chairman of its Siberian Department, and instigator of the Novosibirsk University with its new approach to teaching and the involvement of students in advanced research) that the RSFSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences is the greatest single obstacle to educational advance in the USSR.

At the Moscow Film Festival Peter Ustinov said that we all had more to learn from one another than to teach. That might be the motto of our Society for Cultural Relations. There is much to be learned from the mistakes and achievements of the USSR in the field of education. But Mr. Hutchings's approach—or should we say attitude?—is not one we would recommend for the study.

# ÆSTHETICS AND ETHICS OF SOVIET BALLET

## THOUGHTS ON THE BOLSHOI BALLET

V.K.

THE APPROACH of Soviet choreographers, composers, painters and librettists to ballet is quite different from that of their western colleagues. They choose heroic themes from either contemporary life or the past, provided the latter are consonant with progressive contemporary ideas. *The Distant Planet*, *The Obelisk*, *The Shore of Happiness*, *The Path of Thunder*, *The Red Flower*, *The Flames of Paris*, *Laurencia*, *Cinderella*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Paganini* and *Lieutenant Kije* illustrate this point. 'Life, provided it is truthfully represented in art, is always interesting, and people who look in art only for subjects which produce an effect understand neither life nor art' said Belinsky. And, indeed, we are unable to dissociate ethics from æsthetics in great works of art, whether it be the *Oresteia* by Aeschylus of 2,500 years ago, the *Hamlet* by Shakespeare of about 300 years ago, or Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* of about 150 years ago. The Soviet point of view on ballet as exposed by Yuri Slonimsky in his book *The Bolshoi Ballet*\* was called *Le Pas de Marxisme* by Mr. Alexander Bland in his article in the *Observer* (May 5, 1963). Mr. Bland overlooked that the *pas de deux* of ethics and æsthetics is an immutable fact of life and not an invention of Marx, who propounded his philosophy of æsthetics after the above-mentioned plays had been written. Furthermore, if Mr. Bland will re-read Gœthe's *Faust* he will realise that, contrary to his allegation, *Walpurgisnacht* is not amoral. How is it one can mock the striving of art to serve as spiritual food to man and as an answer to his burning questions?

The search for contemporary themes and a contemporary interpretation of old ones has stimulated the creation of new choreographic forms appropriate to the content and style of new ballets. This does not break with the classical heritage; it is equivalent to tradition undergoing development, or, as they say in Russia, 'tradition in movement'. The Soviet palette of expressiveness surpasses the range of choreographic possibilities of the Imperial school. The most typical tendency in the evolution of classical dancing has always been to rise from the ground first on tip-toes, then on *pointes*, and ultimately to overcome gravity. Hence, *élévation* is a culmination of this *élan* to rise symbolically towards some lofty goal. Of course, a man's dance does not need such transitional phases towards flight; his *élévation* is more powerful, air being his main element, in which he dances also on *pointes*, but without touching the ground. On the other hand, his dance *par terre* is less expressive than a ballerina's, its main aspect being to give her aerial support. Their combined tendency is, however, to rise into the air. Consequently *élévation* together with the other distinctive feature of the Russian school, i.e. space-conquering amplitude of movement, receives incomparably more attention than in western ballet. Other technical methods and means of achieving choreographic eloquence, such as poise of the head, expressive *port de bras*, supple back, etc., are also conducive to the same object—to create a conventional language of choreographic realism coloured by romanticism; in other words, by a warm, emotional and passionate attitude to life and its future progress. The nature of classical ballet

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\* Reviewed by Peter Brinson, p. 47

is poetical; therefore it does not reproduce reality but transfigures it. It appeals to heroic emotions, and postulates harmony between noble ideas and beautiful lines of the human body. Is it surprising, then, that Soviet choreographers insist on a beautiful content in a beautiful form?

These are in fact inseparable. And yet some choreographers ignore the principles laid down by Noverre and developed by his successors. For example, Balanchine, as quoted by James Kennedy in the *Guardian* (in one of its last June issues), expressed to him 'only contempt about the antiquated thinking of Soviet ballet', and added that 'ballet is a woman's world in which man only participates as an honoured guest'. Surely it is the idea of a man's auxiliary role in ballet that is antiquated. In his abstract ballets, Balanchine has reduced the creative part of the choreographer to a mere metronome and the role of the dancers to impersonal automatons without souls. Can his latest inventions—*Movements for Piano and Orchestra* and *Japanese Ballet*—be regarded as beautiful in form and noble in spirit? Neither is the fashion of abstract art an innovation. It began in Russia in about 1910 and was soon given up as futile compared with the works by realist masters. On occasion it may have a merely decorative value, as had indeed been recognised for thousands of years. How long it will be called 'modern' depends on factors the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this article.

In addition to a vastly developed classical lexicon, Soviet choreographers also use character dances which are sadly neglected in western ballet. Character dancing, having originated from folk dancing, paints movements directly from life, its picturesque and drab, poetic and prosaic, romantic and philistine, beautiful and ugly, heroic and mean aspects. Contrary to the classical dance, it does not transfigure and generalise phenomena of life, it differentiates them. Soviet ballet masters thus enrich the choreographic language and present the general through the particular. The influence of both dance forms—classical and character—is reciprocal. Russian choreographers began to fuse both these elements long ago. An outstanding example is to be seen in the double *saut de basque* with which the dance of the chief warrior begins in the Polovtsien dances. But since the revolution the study of folk and character dances has greatly expanded in numerous schools and ensembles of the Soviet republics, where classical discipline is also taught on a vast scale. *Demi-caractère* is also based on a fusion of both elements.



THE REPERTOIRE of the Bolshoi Ballet presented last July was entirely by Russian composers, except some items in the *divertissement*\* and on themes in which æsthetics and ethics are inseparably united. The season opened with *Swan Lake*, Plisetskaya taking the role of Odette-Odile.

It should be said at once that Plisetskaya's style cannot be judged by the accepted academic standards. She has outgrown them because she has ostensibly felt that Chaikovsky's symphonic poem, with its psychological depth, dramatic power, lyrical, tragic, heroic and triumphant emotions, does not lend itself to conservative choreographic canons and cannot be squeezed into rigid classical forms. She has understood that the most important aim is to give a true artistic image, and this could only be done by rendering the traditional classical lines more supple, the movements more spacious, the *élévation* more soaring, the *enchaînement* more flowing, the *tours* more impetuous, the torso positions and poise of the head more varied, and above all the arms more fluid and expressive. A single detail will illustrate this point—how her arms change their wing-like nature to a human aspect after the Prince has liberated her from the Magician's spell and captivity. She accomplishes this transformation by an

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\* *Don Quixote*, Act 1, by Minkus, was presented as an extra item.



eloquent gesture of surprise, as if saying 'I have lost my wings!' There has been a great deal of talk about the difference between the Kirov and Bolshoi styles, sometimes with preference for the former as allegedly more academic and restrained. Actually there has been plenty of interchange of dancers and teachers between Leningrad and Moscow; Plisetskaya has acquired the fabulous plasticity of her arms from Elizaveta Gerdt, a Leningrad teacher transferred to Moscow who gave her lessons for six years, and from Vaganova, who taught her for one year. She learned from these progressive teachers how to realise the ideal of plastic beauty by extending the range and suppleness of classical forms without altering their proportions and without spilling the emotional content over the brim. Her choreographic language is distinguished by her beautifully proportioned physique and superb allure, by the swan-like curve of her back in *arabesque penchée*, from which she emerges without lowering her extended leg raised to the highest point while slowly lifting her head poised on the swan-like neck. She delights not only by the beauty of form, but also by the power of expressiveness, by dancing ideas and feelings. Her entire body sings of a tender love and a broken heart. This is a veritable *cantilena* of the dance. Her arms are a poem. They are transfigured into wings that express various moods. They spread out in soaring ecstasy, quiver in lyrical melody, drop helplessly in despair, caressingly cover her head drooped in romantic sadness. Her movements flow like a musical stream of visual images incarnating Chaikovsky's symphonic poem. Her every pose conveys an idea, a feeling, just like a sculpture that represents a moment of arrested movement. A maiden transformed into a swan daily at dawn does not lose her swan nuances when she assumes a human form at night. The problem of this role is to find an artistic balance between resemblance and non-resemblance to either of these images and to convey the intensity of human feelings when she lives through her romantic and tragic experience. Plisetskaya solves this problem with an impeccable sense of proportion. It is significant that in Act IV there is a typically Russian folk tune to which Asaf Messerer has, appropriately enough, arranged choreography in a pattern reminiscent of *khoro vod* (a Russian round dance). No doubt Chaikovsky must have been inspired to a great extent by Pushkin's Tsarevna-Swan kept in captivity by a magician who has assumed the form of a vulture and who is killed by the Russian prince, the son of Tsar Saltan. The Tsarevna regains then her human form and marries the prince. If the critics had realised the affinity of this image to Odette they would have appreciated Plisetskaya's interpretation and the Bolshoi's choreographic version much more than they did. Some found the happy ending banal. If it is appropriate in Pushkin's fairy tale, why not in *Swan Lake*? Is it not usual for fairy tales to end happily? It has also been remarked by some critics that a swan's wings do not ripple like Plisetskaya's arms. But then a swan's gait is not exactly like a *pas de bourrée*. Should she exhibit naturalism to please them?

Plisetskaya has acquired her stupendous virtuosity mainly in Messerer's class and she convincingly uses it in the creation of the character of Odile, whose diabolical intrigue bursts into the ballroom like a flame that nearly destroys the love poem of Odette and the prince, and whose every gesture is imbued with majestic grandeur to enchant him. Her virtiginous, scintillating *enchainement of tours* is also intended to dazzle the Prince with its cascade of black diamonds and to allure him. Her arms in this act change from their soft lyrical fluidity to a dramatic, staccato-like *brio*.

As regards the ensemble, it is impossible to single out individuals from the wealth of talent, but I should like to mention the exquisite grace of the *pas de trois* in Act I danced by Samokhvalova, Kerelskaya and Nikonov, the superb Spanish dance which, although necessarily somewhat stylised, would be as warmly applauded in Granada itself as it was in London; and, of course, the



brilliant mazurka, the dance which only Poles and Russians know how to perform. Fadeychev as the Prince, with his noble allure, and the rubber-ball-like Jester Soloviev deserve the highest praise. The magic beauty of the *corps de ballet* held one spellbound in admiration of its poetry of movement and sculpturesque groupings, which were worthy of the chisel of a Michelangelo. It must be noted, however, that to those who have seen the Bolshoi *Swan Lake* in Moscow it loses much on the smaller cramped Covent Garden stage.



**R**ADUNSKY'S *Little Hump-backed Horse*, like *Le Coq d'Or*, is a satire on Russian monarchy, with the triumph of good over evil, and like Fokine's ballet it has the same qualities and defects—magnificent recitative, active scenes and a few stirring dances. But whereas Fokine's ballet was saved by Goncharova's superb *décor* and costumes, the like of which had never been seen on the stage, the Bolshoi's ballet is spoiled by Volkov's unimaginative scenery, which lacks the fantastic atmosphere of a fairy tale. Some sets look like pictures on a chocolate box, others like colour photographs. Apparently some Soviet painters are against naturalism in theory only. The accessories, however, are well conceived, i.e. the Tsar's carriage pulled by an emaciated, melancholy-looking horse, the firebird's feather, etc. The costumes, excepting Ivan's (the one in light blue and red, which is magnificent, as good as Goncharova's work) and that of the Little Horse and of the boyars, are poor in design and colour scheme.

Radunsky is a master of mime both as choreographer and actor. He would have been highly praised by Stanislavsky himself. His portrait of the Tsar is truthfully painted from Ershov's verses, in a grotesque, pompous and comical manner, and he has beautifully arranged the role of the Little Horse, danced with infinite charm by the dainty Tatiana Popko. The choreographic conception of this image, by the way, is as ingenious as that of Fokine's golden cockerel. The dances in the first two acts had no *élan*: the gipsy dance lacked fire, and the Russian dance had no intense national colour and swing as compared, for example, with the dances of the Moiseyev and Soviet Army ensembles and Goleizovsky's unforgettable gipsy dance performed with flaming passion by Tamara Varlamova and Peter Khomutov during the Bolshoi concert season at the Albert Hall in 1960. The dancers are given no scope to show their rich talent; only in the last act do they get an opportunity, where the Russian dance is masterly choreographed and is superbly danced by Karelskaya and Antonov. I have seen Plisetskaya as the Tsar-Maiden and Vasiliev as Ivan only in a film, and find little difference between these two pairs as regards artistry. There is also some very effective choreography in 'The Underwater Kingdom', The Empress Sprite, corals, fishes and medusæ give a complete illusion of swimming and dancing in an undulating medium. Shchedrin's music has sparks of gaiety, humour and national colour. It portrays the characters with subtle psychological insight, at appropriate moments it reproduces the airs of accordion and balalaika and gracefully characterises the Little Horse by a piccolo flute.



**T**HE BOLSHOI *Cinderella* is a masterpiece which will become an immortal classic like *The Sleeping Beauty*. The British public has received it with enthusiasm. The ability of music to express subtle intonations of feelings and ideas was called 'psychological vibration' by Chaliapin. Prokofiev's score possesses this property of reflecting life. He uses comic colours and satiric strokes for the portraits of the Stepmother and the Two Sisters, whereas *Cinderella* is painted in harmonious lyrical tones. Struchkova is a great dancer-

actress. From the beginning her Cinderella's kind nature, humility, diligence, compassion and simplicity evoke warm sympathy. In her mime and dancing she reflects the slightest rhythmic nuances of the music. She does not merely personify separate psychological features of the character, but unfolds its development in what Stanislavsky called a 'through action'. She follows the stream of musico-choreographic dramaturgy to its climax. She does not have to concentrate on technique because it is so effortless and graceful, with the result that only a captivating artistic image emerges. She dances as naturally as a bird sings. Her temperament is full of youthful charm, and lends itself marvellously to this role, as if it were specially created for her. Her ethereal dance, with its smooth, scintillating *bourrée*, floating *élévation* and poetical arms, grows in a crescendo of soaring flight until it reaches an apotheosis in the adagio of the love duet with those inimitable breath-taking 'lifts' that the public finds so irresistible. With radiant *joie de vivre* she reacts to the happiness of her first love and the gifts bestowed upon her by the fairy. Vladimir Vasiliev is also a great artist whose range of *genre* extends from the role of the Peasant in the *Hump-backed Horse* to the Prince in *Cinderella*. He is endowed with virile elegance and superlative *aplomb*. He enters the ballroom and alights on his throne like a falling meteor. He travels round the world with the weightlessness of a cosmonaut in search of the owner of the lost shoe. Unfortunately I have not seen Mikhail Lavrovsky and Maris Liepa in this role. There are no small roles and no small actors in this ballet. Everyone plays perfectly in true Stanislavsky tradition. The dances choreographed by Zakharov are not only a delight to the eye, but an organic part of the story. The waltz is exquisitely romantic, and the mazurka elegantly brilliant. I am disappointed in the Andalusian scene, however: it is too conventional, and the Spanish dance too stylised. Natalia Bessmertnova, the young girl who floats in the air when dancing the autumn fairy, looks in physique and style like Pavlova, and I hope she will be as great. Pyotr Williams is a great master of palette; in some of his sets the colours are deep and contrasting, but are so well matched that they produce an harmonious ensemble. His *décor* and costumes are in the period style of Louis XV, which is most appropriate for Perrault's fairy tale. Some people do not like rococo, but only those without æsthetic sense could say that his designs are 'tawdry' or 'tasteless'. No doubt the transformation scenes would produce a more fantastic illusion if seen in the Bolshoi Theatre, with its large, technically well-equipped stage.

The clock, with its dwarfs who pop out in the dark carrying luminous hours which are extinguished one by one as it strikes twelve, is a magic device. The costumes are well designed, and those worn by the Prince are superb. Of course, the dresses of the Stepmother and the Sisters have a touch of vulgarity, but this is deliberate. Some critics revealed their partiality. One of them went so far as to say that the Bolshoi *Cinderella* is unmusical in its choreography as compared with the Royal Ballet's. It would appear to be the same critic who did not recognise the difference between Chaikovsky and Minkus at a gala performance in aid of the Royal Academy of Dancing because the programme was unexpectedly altered without announcement. Prokofiev himself, who personally supervised the choreographic composition of his ballet, and who, Ulanova says, was difficult to please, was well satisfied with its musicality and thanked the entire troupe for a brilliant performance. I wonder whether he would have approved Sir Frederick Ashton's interpretation of his music, especially the kind of dance arranged to the mazurka, the clownish types of the Ugly Sisters and the omission of the Stepmother. In my opinion Sir Frederick's *Cinderella* was more a pantomime than a ballet, and might well have been called *Two Ugly Sisters*.



WHEN FIRST presented in London in 1956 *Romeo and Juliet* was regarded by some critics as the most reactionary of ballets. Now they have at long last realised that it is a most progressive work of art. So I need not argue with them this time. But there are still a few who are unable to appreciate its high self-significant cultural value, and I have even come across such expressions as ‘aping of Shakespeare’, as if no ballet should be based on a theme borrowed from literature; but it is not worth taking any notice of their opinion. All the components of this masterpiece—music, choreography, performance, *décor* and costumes—resuscitate the Verona of the Renaissance period and make all scenes throb with life. Their combined power of æsthetic and psychological impact is formidable. Prokofiev’s musical portraits depict the most essential features of the characters, not only by means of ‘danceable’ melodic lines, but also by rhythms which Ulanova at first found strange and unorthodox; but having eventually overcome their difficulties she said that if she had been given more traditional music she would not have been able to interpret the role of Juliet. I do not wish to repeat what I wrote earlier about Leonid Lavrovsky’s choreography, but I should like to add that he has co-ordinated movements with sound in a masterly manner by synchronisation, counterpoint or close parallelism. I must also again pay a tribute to Struchkova’s superb and entrancing performance. Although her Juliet looks like a maiden from a Botticelli picture she has, perhaps, a Russian soul, but Shakespeare’s heroine is universal. In her interpretation Struchkova is equally moving in lyrical as well as heroic and tragic situations as she visibly grows into a woman. Her down-like lightness in dancing is incredible and her acting in the tomb scene is uncanny. To compare her Juliet with Ulanova’s would be like comparing the Madonnas of two old Italian masters. Liepa’s Romeo is a romantic and heroic figure. Samokhvolova’s grace as Juliet’s friend and Nikonov’s elegant weightlessness as Troubadour are full of lyrical charm. Vanke’s intensely dramatic portrayal of Lady Capulet and Peshcherikova’s characterisation of the Nurse are striking. I cannot mention all the artists; each one, including those in the crowd, is a magnificent Shakespearean actor. The orchestra under Rozhdestvensky’s magic baton excelled itself. The impression from the whole unrivalled performance is unforgettable.



THE FOURTH act of *Gayane* in its exotic beauty had the same kind of impact that stunned western Europe when Diaghilev presented the Polovtsien dances. It is a Caucasian scene, and as such should be compared with Fokine’s *Tamar*. It surpasses that great master’s choreography in its realistic approach to Caucasian folklore. Moreover, Balakirev’s symphonic poem was not written for ballet, whereas Khachaturian’s music was. It seems that the composer and choreographer (Nina Anisimova) have extracted the aromatic essence of all Caucasian flowers and distilled this into a highly individual fragrance. The musico-choreographic picture pulsates with intense national colours and rhythms, the various Caucasian and Russian dances are performed with such passion, abandon and finesse that it is difficult to decide whom to watch at any particular moment. The principal roles were danced by Timofeyeva, Fadeychev and that little prodigy of dainty grace Tatyana Popko; but Kashani, Kasatkina, Sitnikov, Trembovetskaya, Yagudin, Kholena, Nikolai Simachev (the soloist, in the *lezghinka*) and others were also superb. To dance as they did, one must have fire in the blood. It should be emphasised that whereas the *lezghinka* in *Tamar* was a stylised ballet dance, in *Gayane* it is a genuine Caucasian marvel, although danced by Russians, who I did not think would be able to grasp its native allure. I was mistaken! Rindin’s *décor* and costumes equal in taste the best that Diaghilev ever presented. The only difference is that the designs of the

*Miriskusstva* painters were more elaborate, whereas Rindin's are striking in their simplicity and economy of means, with which he achieves the same kind of colourful effect.



LAVROVSKY'S *Paganini* is built almost entirely on mimed plasticity, with glimpses of dance of action. A ballet on this theme can neither reveal the greatest purely dancing qualities of Soviet dancers nor provide an opportunity for their superb dramatic acting as *Romeo and Juliet* does. It differs from Fokine's version, in which Paganini carries a violin, in that here his body and movements are tuned, as Lavrovsky says, like a perfect instrument, thus symbolising the beauty and power of music itself. Moreover, Rachmaninov himself wrote to Fokine on April 3, 1939: 'I have received the *décor* designs and like them very much. Only why has Paganini changed his profession and become a guitarist?' A more generalised idea is also apparent in the Bolshoi *décor* by Rindin, which, according to the choreographer's and designer's conception, does not represent a concrete reality of Paganini's surroundings but emphasises his experience, ideas and feelings. Rindin has succeeded in realising this conception with impeccable taste. The suggestion of a cathedral seen through transparent curtains and subtle lighting effects reveal his refined imagination. Surely Bolshoi's scenery and costumes at best are not 'conventional and dull'. It may take some British critics seven years to realise their error of æsthetic judgment as it did in the case of *Romeo and Juliet*. I cannot, and dare not, argue with Mikhail Gabovich on matters of technique. He is an expert, a former dancer of the Bolshoi Theatre, and he is one of the best ballet critics, but I do not think he is right in saying that Lavrovsky's introduction of an anti-clerical theme produces a contradiction between the music and the alteration in accent as regards the sense of choreographic action. It is an anti-clerical, not an anti-religious theme. Although Paganini's biography is full of legend it is an historical fact that the church not only persecuted him during his life as much as did his untalented rivals, but also refused to give him a Christian burial. Rachmaninov's rhapsody is not programme music, and was not originally intended for a ballet. There is nothing in it to suggest that Lavrovsky's anti-clerical theme is out of place. In fact there are no themes in it except variations on a theme of Paganini. Yaroslav Sekh as Paganini and Maximova as the Muse gave a very musical and extremely sensitive performance.



THE DIVERTISSEMENTS should be appraised in superlatives. Bessmertnova's and Lavrovsky's *Etude* to the music by Liszt was airborne, and her graceful figure and beautiful classical line renewed my hope that she will become an artist of Pavlova's calibre.

Yagudin's *Gopak* is too fantastic to visualise without actually seeing it. It defies description. I have never seen such prodigious leaps performed with such effortless *ballon*, excepting Farmavyants's smooth *élévation*. It seemed he could rise into the air still higher if the choreography demanded it. *Etude*, to Gliere's music danced by Struchkova and Lapauri, was a marvel of beautiful ecstasy, and contained some breathtaking 'lifts'. Struchkova as usual showed her superb artistry.

The *pas de deux* from *Don Quixote*, danced by dainty Maximova and weightless Vasiliev, surpassed all previous performances of this grand classic. Maximova's technique is astounding. It would seem that there was no more room for its further perfection. Her balance on *pointe* is a miracle. She wittily holds it for as long as the conductor of the orchestra allows her, but she could apparently sustain it longer without any preparation. Was it Semyonova, the

greatest exponent of this particular ability of remaining in equilibrium on *pointe*, who taught her this? Vasiliev's flying *tours en l'air* with extended leg defy gravity. He rises into the air and tarries there for a few moments. Rachmaninov's *Elégie*, danced by Timofeyeva and Fadeychev, was almost evanescent in its vision-like lightness, in spite of the tasteless costumes. Plisetskaya's *Le Cygne* concluded the programme. Comparisons of performances of this dance by different great artists would not decide whose interpretation of Fokine's masterpiece is the greater. Pavlova's was the nearest to his choreography; her image of the dying swan was resigned to the bird's inevitable end. Ulanova's was just as poignant but more irreconcilable and heroic in its struggle with death. Plisetskaya's is majestic as well as poignant.

There is no doubt that the half of the Bolshoi troupe sent to Covent Garden had sufficient stars for two or three companies. A number of its soloists had no available roles to play. I must say, however, that these gods of ballet deserve to have better costumes in some of these dances.



**L**IEUTENANT KIJÉ is a satire on the reign of Tsar Paul I. Prokofiev's score conveys the sarcasm and humour of the subject matter by means of witty combinations of sounds, sudden rhythmic transitions, harmony and counter-point. Psychological effects are achieved by timbre characterisation of individual groups of instruments. The functional significance of the instruments is brilliantly distributed among the characters. Their steps and movements are accompanied by appropriate sounds—giggling flutes, mocking saxophone, etc. The Pen is a symbol of the bureaucratic machine that rules the fate of men, and it may serve as a reminder of all governmental institutions in which red tape flourishes. Its scribbling orders are characterised by a drum beating a 'shotty' rhythm. Other dancers also incarnate Prokofiev's biting music in concrete choreographic portraits. Soldiers drilled like automatons form a typical image of Paul's monarchy. The presence of invisible Lieutenant Kije, who was born of an ink blot, is felt on the stage by virtue of his relationship with the other characters, among whom Struchkova as the Lady in Waiting is outstanding. She reveals herself as a splendid comedienne. When she becomes the widow of the imaginary Kije she displays humour and satire in a most subtle manner. In the gestures and steps of the mad Tsar are seen suspicion of his subjects and fear of his own innumerable orders which in the end overwhelm and crush him after he has found the empty coffin of the promoted commanding officer Kije. The *décor* is cleverly done in the style of Russian broadsheets—*lubki*—in seven scenes of witty caricature. It is a recitative ballet, in which there is little dancing, and it could readily be performed by a much lesser company than the Bolshoi.



**I**REGRET having missed *Don Quixote*, which for some reason was given only once. Another jewel in the Bolshoi's crown, *The School of Ballet*, was a little luckier: it was presented twice in the evening and once at a matinée. This ballet shows how a human body develops in the process of classical training and becomes beautiful, beginning with the first hesitating steps of little pupils and leading up to the formation of great virtuosos, stunningly beautiful in their inspired flight. We see the æsthetic exposition of Soviet choreographic principles and their ethical tendency to create a plastic language worthy of noble and heroic themes. This is not a *divertissement*, there are no disconnected dances in it. Neither are there discords or grotesque modernistic distortions of classical lines, such as are frequently seen in some highly praised western



choreographies. Strict discipline and rigorous logic of composition dominate the whole ballet. There is a learned progression of consecutively conditioned movements. Each step, gesture and pose forms a link in the *enchainement* of a choreographic phrase, and each phrase, duly punctuated, culminates in a peak of virtuosity. The aim is not to show separate, technically difficult and effortless movements, but to present their harmonious co-ordination and their organic unity with the music. The choreographer, Asaf Messerer, and the dancers\* assert the joy of life and beauty of human form through dancing in its most perfect, incomparable and unrivalled manifestation. *School of Ballet* is an apotheosis of the dance, a living monument to the glory of classical ballet at its highest. And Shostakovich's music, specially written for it, is most danceable.



**T**HERE HAS been much discussion and argument in press and on radio as to which school of ballet is better—the Royal or the Bolshoi. I shall content myself by quoting Madame Karsavina when she was asked, in the BBC programme *Two Worlds of Ballet*, which school she would place her daughter in if she had one. ‘The Bolshoi’, she replied, and gave as her reason the following phrase from Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*: ‘Shall I behold again the soul-inspired flight of the Russian Terpsichore?’

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\* There is not space to praise individual dancers. There are too many. I can only mention the names of the principal ones: Timofeyeva, Maximova, Samokhvalova, Liepa, Vasiliev, Lavrovsky, Nikonov, Chistova, Bessmertnova, Sorokina, Popko, Koshelev, Zakalinski and Trushkin.

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# THE TREATMENT OF DELINQUENCY IN THE USSR

## IMPRESSIONS OF A STUDY TOUR

A party of thirty-five members of the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency made in May 1963 a study tour which had as its objective the gaining of first-hand information about the prevention and treatment of delinquency in the Soviet Union. The group was led by the general secretary of the ISTD, Miss Eve Saville, and included magistrates, members of the prison, Borstal and approved school services, psychiatrists, probation officers, and psychiatric and other social workers. It was the first time that a party of this size and composition had visited the USSR for this specific purpose.

On the way out, stops were made in Berlin and Warsaw, where a prison and a girls' correctional home were visited respectively; on the return journey a newly built hostel for ex-prisoners was visited in Stockholm. In all three places full discussions took place with leading officials in the penal administration. The major part of the time, however, was spent in Moscow and Leningrad, where visits of sociological and criminological interest were arranged through the good offices of the USSR—Great Britain Society, and intensive talks with lawyers, penologists and delinquency workers can almost be said to have satisfied the insatiable curiosity of the ISTD party. A detailed report of the tour is being published by the Institute; in this article we give the individual impressions of two members of the group. In the first of the following notes Ethel Perry writes about the treatment of juveniles, delinquent and otherwise, in the USSR; in the second, Mary Stone describes a visit to the Kryukovo labour colony.

### I

#### E. Perry

THE AGE of criminal responsibility in the USSR is fourteen. From fourteen to sixteen years a young person is classed as a juvenile, and can be held responsible for certain crimes. At eighteen he must take adult responsibility for his actions. Prevention of crime is fundamental social policy, and welfare and educational work among children is organised to this end. The local urban and rural centres of this organisation are the 'children's rooms' in the police (militia) stations. These are presided over by inspectors with pedagogical\* or legal training, the present trend being for both qualifications. The inspectors are subordinate each to his or her local chief of militia (police). Working with the inspectors are trained workers also with legal and/or pedagogical training. It is the function of these qualified officers to co-opt volunteer workers from their local populations in all walks of life and then to supervise their voluntary work with children and juveniles.

The first duty of both qualified and voluntary workers is to make a study of the locality and then to carry out close liaison with local institutions—schools,

\* This word, which was used extensively in translation, appears to connote more than 'teacher training'—rather, training in educational methods to enable potential teachers to bring up their pupils as good Soviet citizens.

children's clubs, pioneer centres, parents' associations, local trade union branches, Comrades' Courts, technical and apprenticeship training for older children, etc. Through this it is possible to screen children in need of care and protection, pre-delinquent children, those not being brought up well enough, those who for any reason are work-shy, those with inadequate parents, and so on. Special attention is paid to children who have already been to 'colonies' or have appeared before the courts. If a child seems to need help for any reason he is taken to the children's room, where the circumstances of his life are investigated. He may have to go to a reception-distribution centre while this is carried out, but should not stay there for more than a month. He can stay only a maximum of four to six hours in the children's room itself.

If circumstances are such that he can be fittingly left in his community he is allotted to a voluntary worker, who may be either male or female, according to which seems more suitable to the case. The worker then carries on intensive work with the child, trying to fill a need both in his life and in that of the family, which the worker visits at least once a week. (A notable 'need' after the last war was for a father-figure in many families.) The youngster is cultivated by the worker, who spends much leisure time with him at home and outside, introducing him to local children's clubs and other institutions; thus he attempts to integrate his protégé into both his home and his local child community. Sometimes 'therapeutic groups' of children under observation are formed. Great importance is attached to the relationship between worker and child, the worker reporting regularly to his supervisor, who will change him if such a course seems indicated. The child in question does not know he is being observed; to allow him to do so would be 'anti-pedagogic'.

A child who cannot be left at home is sent to an educational, correctional-educational or medical-educational institution, or other colony, judged most appropriate for his individual needs. A child who fails to respond satisfactorily to the efforts of the worker may also be sent to an institution. In all cases direction to an institution is made either by court order or by special children's commissions.

In order to appreciate the actual workings of a scheme such as the above it must be considered in its proper social content and background. As far as children are concerned, a major factor must be the relationships which they have the opportunity to build with adults in their community. Ten days in a country is too short a time for real understanding, but one can gain strong impressions, and one of these was certainly that the authority which children experience in the USSR is benign. My own feeling is that the Russians have dispensed with 'awe' in their dealings with children, either delinquent or non-delinquent. On reflection, I wonder if they have even a word for our western conception of respect mingled with fear or dread.

At the Uspolny Street School in Moscow, where they specialise in the teaching of English, the 'tone' was very good and discipline-free. There was obvious friendly mutual respect between teachers and pupils, many of whom (aged twelve to thirteen) talked with confidence to their English visitors. At the Palace of Pioneers in Leningrad, where children of nine to fourteen years attend as part of their education, there was the same atmosphere of tolerance and warmth, though perhaps less of relaxation. This, however, was difficult to judge, as summer holidays had begun and there were not many children about. Many schools in the USSR work in two shifts, and the Pioneer headquarters in each district carries on 'pedagogical-educational' work providing for artistic, physical and technical activities. Cybernetics, electronics and aeronautics figure on the technical side at the Palace of Pioneers. There are good libraries, and a former ballroom is used mostly as a theatre. There are fifteen pioneer centres in Leningrad, the Palace of Pioneers being the main one.

At a Moscow People's Court we attended the second and final day of the hearing of a case of robbery with violence against four youths aged fifteen to seventeen years, and were given a simultaneous translation of the proceedings. All the boys were ably defended, one by his schoolmaster and the others by lawyers. Mrs. Dobranskaya, the judge, a graduate in law of Moscow University, gave us a summary of the previous day's hearing before the boys entered the court. She was unassuming in manner, but left no one in doubt of her insight and ability. We visited the children's room at Militia Headquarters 83 in the central part of Moscow, where Mrs. Timofeyevna, the chief inspector, talked to us. Her talk reinforced the strong impression formed from our other experiences of a benign authority concerned with each individual under its care.

All whom we had met had impressed me, and I think the others of our party, as persons of intelligence, warmth, tolerance and sincerity. In practice they needed no trappings of office to 'depersonalise' their relationships with those in their educational or legal care. When she spoke to us in her children's room, Mrs. Timofeyevna was wearing an attractive red frock. We brought up the subject of uniform, and she said she wore one only on official occasions or if she were to give a public lecture. But it was obvious that she had no great love for it, and that it seldom, if ever, saw the children's room. (It is relevant to remark here that even the police station itself did not look like one). The women defending the delinquent boys in the People's Court wore ordinary summer dresses, as did also the two women on the bench. The male member of the bench was in an open-necked shirt and trousers, the male advocate in a light suit. The woman lawyer, whom we had seen perform a marriage ceremony at the Palace of Marriages in Leningrad, was in a two-piece summer outfit. The same ununiformed informality characterised our very interesting round-table discussion with a group of lawyers at the House of Friendship in Moscow, under the chairmanship of Professor Boris Nikiforov, which includes Madame Nina Ilyina, head of the Department of Juvenile Delinquency in the Procuracy of the RSFSR.

Another very dominant and thought-provoking impression, which can only be mentioned here, was of the close relatedness of pedagogical thought with legal thought in the USSR. Qualification in either law or pedagogy seemed equally valuable for, and therefore interchangeable in, some positions; many were trained in both. Thus it appeared that the chief inspector of a children's room could be either legally trained or a trained teacher. The headmaster of one of the delinquents at the People's Court could act as his advocate, while the other youths were represented by lawyers. There would appear in this system of close relationship, both in theory and practice, between law and pedagogy implicit recognition of the essential common humanity of law-abider and law-breaker, with a wish to hold the delinquent within the social fold—the opposite attitude to regarding him as an outcast, and a firm foundation on which to build their preventive system in regard to delinquency. It should be added that general observation in park, street, store and Metro, and also a Sunday evening conversation with English-speaking teachers at their 'Teachers' House' in Moscow, confirmed impressions gained from our official visits of the tolerant, kindly treatment Russian children receive from their elders, no matter whether still children themselves or adults in authority.

## II

### M. Stone

**B**EFORE we left the USSR we had been able to learn something of the penal measures at present in force in the various union republics, and at the top of the list in the Criminal Code of the RSFSR of 1960-1 comes custodial treat-

ment—in Soviet terminology ‘deprivation of freedom’. There follows a variety of other punishments, such as transportation, exile, corrective labour without imprisonment, prohibition on entering particular employments or exercising particular activities, fines, dismissal from employment, and so on. It was, however, custodial treatment, as applied to male adults, that some of us were able to see in operation when we visited the correctional labour colony at Kryukovo, thirty miles north of Moscow.

We already knew in theory that there were four types of correctional labour colony, differing in the strictness of their régime and the degree of freedom granted to inmates, and this was confirmed in a talk with Mrs. Dobranskaya, chairman of a People’s Court in Moscow; she called the ‘improving camps’. First comes the ‘camp of common régime’, i.e. the easiest, for first and minor offenders; next came camps of more strict régime, for more serious offences; third, still stricter camps for second offenders and recidivists; and fourth, camps for specially dangerous prisoners. The correctional labour colony at Kryukovo is of the first kind, a ‘camp of general régime’, according to commandant Ozherelyoev, with a population of between 400 and 700 inmates over the age of eighteen, mainly first offenders who had committed ‘not very serious’ crimes, such as hooliganism, larceny and traffic offences. The length of sentences varied between six months and three years.

We were allowed a great deal of freedom in looking at Kryukovo, and a full account of all we saw and learnt would take too much space. Perhaps the best that can be done is to mention some of the features which particularly struck those of us accustomed to the English penal system and its institutions for adult offenders. First, the physical aspects of the camp; the workshops and living quarters are quite separate—there is no cellular accommodation, so there is a complete absence of the clanging doors and rattling keys so familiar in an English closed prison. In fact, the freedom of movement in the workshops and dormitories gave one the feeling of being in an open prison, so that there was a special sense of shock each time one caught sight of the perimeter stockade with its watchtowers, searchlights, and guards armed with automatic rifles; then one knew one was a long way from home.

The workshop buildings are old and dingy, but they are full of excellent modern machinery, producing sheet-metal goods (mainly kitchen utensils and toys) and oil filters, cylinder heads for cars, ball-bearings, etc. In the time available we were able to see only a few of the shops. ‘We have a big plant here’ said the commandant, and indeed the workshop part of the camp is in effect a light engineering factory. We were told that two shifts were worked, each of eight hours. The official working day in the Soviet Union is seven hours, and the extra hour is worked ‘to make the men realise that they were offenders’. The second shift, we learnt, came on at 4 p.m. and knocked off at 2 a.m. the next day!

The dormitories, in two-story buildings, are again old and drab; the sleeping accommodation is in double-decker bunks, long rows of them pushed (to our English eyes) far too close together. But there are many facilities for spare-time occupations—an outdoor basketball court, an outdoor theatre, cinema shows, libraries, quiet rooms, clubs, drama groups, art, a choir and an orchestra.

Even more unfamiliar, however, than the physical conditions of the camp is the positive philosophy behind the régime. Perhaps its two main beliefs, as they appeared to an English observer, can be summed up as salvation through work—for the glory of the USSR; and salvation through faith—in Marxist-Leninist doctrines and their distillation in the concept of the good Soviet citizen. The whole effort of the administration seems directed to ‘re-forming’ the inmates to an ideal pattern, and any suggestion that some men might, through psychological handicaps, be incapable of ‘choosing the way of reform’ is not acceptable.

A variety of methods is used to achieve this end, but two struck us particu-

larly strongly. First, group pressures; the inmates are divided into brigades and each brigade is collectively responsible to a large degree for the behaviour of its members and for fulfilling (indeed, over-fulfilling) its work target. We saw a large outdoor notice-board bearing a list of promises which every inmate had to make—to fulfil his work target ahead of time; to carry out his work plan not 100 per cent, but 110 per cent; to raise productivity by making suggestions for the better operation of the workshops; to ‘struggle against those who offend against discipline’, etc. We saw, on a notice-board headed *Krokodil*, comic posters holding up to ridicule prisoners who had committed offences against discipline, such as being dirty at work or smoking where forbidden; the prisoners’ names and numbers were clear for all to see. Conversely there were boards bearing photographs of the ‘best’ prisoners, and comparative tables of the work achievements of the various brigades and teams.

The other main pressure which was strange to us came from members of the staff—‘tutors’ in charge of each brigade, who specialise in ‘political and cultural work’ with the offenders. Everyone has a lesson in politics once a week, and two or three lectures monthly are devoted (I quote the words of the staff, as interpreted) to ‘the morals of a young Soviet man in the condition of socialism’, i.e. to showing how ‘everyone who has broken the law can again become an honest member of Soviet society’. In addition, education classes are compulsory for those who have not completed the prescribed ‘eight years’ schooling’ of the normal Soviet citizen.

One other feature of the camp, often discussed in England but not so far a part of our penal system, must be mentioned: the provision for marital, or rather family, visits lasting two or three days, granted to those inmates thought by the commandant to have progressed exceptionally well along the path to reform. We saw one of the rooms set aside for this purpose, with sleeping accommodation and cooking facilities, where an inmate, his wife and their small daughter of perhaps six years of age, were living temporarily *en famille*.

What about after-care? From what we had already learned during other visits and talks in Moscow, and from what we had heard at Kryukovo, we came to realise that a specialised after-care service, as in England, was just not appropriate in the USSR. We learnt that men who had no particular trade before they came to the camp can acquire one there; that inmates are paid for their work at the same rate as in an ‘outside enterprise’; and that after deduction for board, lodging and clothing and any damages owing to the State, the balance is kept as savings or can be sent to the man’s family. If a man gets his trade certificate in prison he has the same rights as anyone else regarding the kind of job he can get on release; all Soviet enterprises being state-owned, there are no difficulties with trade unions such as sometimes arise in this country, and an ex-inmate is automatically restored to membership of his union, although his time in the labour camp does not count in his membership record.

On release, we were told, any offender who has no savings available is supplied by the camp administration with money to tide him over till he gets a job and the appropriate municipal council has an absolute responsibility to find him one within two weeks of release. His general, moral and social welfare will be catered for by the many existing organisations in Soviet society, e.g. the works, committee in each enterprise, the trade union, the apartment block council, and so on. We were told that representatives of local organisations visit the colony and make contact with the inmates with a view to follow-up on discharge. Once again we were conscious of the many pressures towards conformity in Soviet society, and realised that throughout the treatment of offenders, both in the camp and afterwards, runs the idea of ‘being one’s brother’s keeper’, which we had found such a noticeable feature of life in the USSR.

(Concluded on page 43)



# ‘GIVE ME A BOOK ABOUT SPIES’

JOTTINGS BY A LIBRARIAN

Marina Shagalova

A WORKING LAD—a member of a volunteer public order squad—spoke up at the readers’ conference. He said that his comrades, good lads on the whole, played cards and acted the hooligan not knowing what to do with their free time. It never entered their heads that this free time of theirs could be used some other way. They hadn’t the slightest idea how many books they hadn’t read, how many interesting things they might discover but hadn’t found out. But who was to blame for this?

Unfortunately, I cannot say that a book is the panacea for all ills. But it seems to me that if someone is brought up on good books in early youth, as long as he doesn’t simply read and remember them but feels them, he is hardly likely to become a philistine or a grabber, a boor or a ‘time-killer’.

If from adolescence he likes discovering new things from books, and likes comprehending what he has learned, he certainly won’t go looking for a card school, muck about or split a bottle of vodka with pals just out of boredom. Sergei Narovchatov put this very well in an article, ‘World of Hope and Passion’: ‘I am positive that if one knows such poems by heart from childhood [he had Lermontov’s *The Sail* and *The Angel* in mind—M.S.], it is impossible to become a scoundrel. That is what art exists for’.

And not long ago James Aldridge said in *Yunost* that you cannot be a cynic and love Dickens; the two are simply incompatible.

It is not coincidence that the Soviet poet and the English novelist are so in agreement. There is great truth in their words.

I don’t know who is to blame that the lads mentioned above had not become readers. Their parents? Their school? The library? All of them, probably.

They weren’t taught to love books and to use them in childhood. But now they are adults, and now they themselves are also to blame.



I WORK in a children’s library, but I don’t want to speak about everyone who comes here, only in the main of senior pupils, of their tastes and inclinations, what they read and what they do not read.

Youngsters are often franker with us librarians than with their teachers. We don’t question them about their lessons, we don’t mark their work; we try to answer their questions and—it must be confessed—we understand and sympathise when some of them complain about their school.

Sometimes they speak openly and sometimes only in hints, not so much about their teachers as about their subjects—what they are taught, and how; about the books recommended at school and the ones that are not recommended.

Each youngster has to be treated differently. Each one has to be given something for himself, something special. It’s not always easy to meet the requests of many of them: good books don’t stay on the shelves, as we know. It is even more difficult to refuse a request and persuade a boy or a girl to take something you suggest.

‘Give me something about spies, please’.

‘Have you read everything of Lermontov’s?’

‘Oh, bother him! He’s boring. . . . We did him at school. . . . Oh, yes, have you something about Pechorin? [a character in Lermontov’s *A Hero of Our Time*—Ed.]. I need it for an essay. . . .’



It's real torture, a punishment from on high, all these endless enquiries about Onegin, Pechorin, Mitrofanushka. I suggest some anthologies of critical articles about the Russian classics, but they simply terrify many fifteen-year-olds. They want the systematic commentaries and descriptions for teachers. It is with difficulty that you persuade them that it is hard to think of anything better than Belinsky, Dobrolyubov or Lunarcharsky. You persuade them that they could write as good a description themselves as that of any by the authors of the commentaries if they only gave it a little thought. But they don't want Lunarcharsky or Belinsky; they don't want to think. They want to copy out the essay they have to do, and in their free time to read something better—Dickens, for instance.

A great many follow this road, including some very interesting, developed youngsters. Why? Because they are bored, because there's no interest for them in writing their thousand-and-first study of the life of Onegin. Their teachers wrote essays before them on the same subjects they are now setting. One can't help recalling the 'Trial of Onegin' in *The Two Captains*—now that was interesting! Now one understands these youngsters and sees their side of it! Dickens is a veritable treasure-trove for the young spirit, but an essay—who wants that? How to read criticism, how to learn to think independently, isn't 'done' at school.

There are some, however, who come of themselves and ask for the Russian classics that aren't 'done'. Others don't ask for them themselves, and take them hesitatingly, but read Pushkin's *Little Tragedies* for example with pleasure and delight. But what is to be done about those who flatly refuse the classics—Russian or foreign—in spite of all persuasion, entreaty and near command?

Here are some cases I have come across.

Conversation with a fourteen-year-old boy:

'Fine. You've had some fiction [Lermontov and Maine Reed—those are the taste of many at that age]. Now what about a scientific book of some sort?'

'What kind?'

'Have you got a favourite subject at school?'

'No. But give me something about travel'.

I give him *Kon-Tiki*.

'Read it. You'll like it. Have you done this?'

'Oh no', he replies, 'and we won't'.

'Well then, all the more reason to read it. Here, take *On the Trail of the Mountain Goat* as well.'

We're not able to check up how he read the books, what he remembered, what he didn't understand. We have to wait until there's a readers' conference—if and when one is held on this subject. But conferences are very seldom organised on subjects other than 'educational' ones.

More often than not the youngsters at these conferences discuss old books, long familiar to everyone; very seldom is there a discussion on art, and even more rarely on science. That's out of the question! There are commentaries in the methods room on *The Street of the Younger Son*, but there is nothing on Chukovsky's *Frigate Sailors*. But then it's not so simple to 'tack' something educational on to the latter. And it's not 'done' in school.

But what is done at school in literature? And how? In the fifth year *The Frog Princess*, *The Tale of the Dead Tsarevna*—that is, the same as they have already read in the third year. They are done thoroughly—plots, characterisation, even artistic peculiarities; and quite often they are taught in a stereotyped, standard manner. We find that everything depends on the teacher himself more than on anyone else, on his love of the subject and his level of knowledge. The poor twelve-year-olds fall victim to clichés and models, first write essays on

the classics and later on their own compositions according to a standard pattern laid down once and for all: 'Introduction', 'Body', 'Conclusion'.

How can one ever encourage love for literature in this way?

Or take another example—a fifteen-year-old.

'Did you like Pushkin's poems?' I ask. 'Have you learned any of them?'

'No, I didn't like them at all; I only learned the very shortest one—we were told in school to learn whichever one we liked'.

'But what lovely poems they are—even the short ones, as you say: *I Loved You*, and *In the Hills of Georgia*'.

'They're good poems, only we didn't do them'.

'Then what the devil did you do? Pushkin has to be read, not done!'

Perhaps it's just as well that it is Pushkin's anniversary this year.

With fifteen-year-old girls this is the kind of rueful conversation that takes place. The girl points to the exhibition 'Heroes and Martyrs of Science', and says:

'Give me that one, *Joliot-Curie*'; and adds naïvely, 'What is Joliot-Curie?'

'?! ?! ?!'. Slowly I lower myself on to my stool. 'Don't you know? Haven't you heard the name?'

'No, we haven't done that. . . .'

Then I remember—modern physics is 'done' in the top forms.

Of course, one doesn't often hear things like that. But the majority of thirteen-year-olds whom we questioned were unable to say who Columbus was, who had discovered the North Pole, and who had discovered Antarctica. With difficulty they recalled the names of Magellan and Miklukho-Maklai. They had not 'done' them; so though they might know Cook, Golovin, Nansen, Amundsen and Lazarev they weren't obliged to. Those who want to will read about them. And those who don't want to? Those it's not possible to persuade, cajole or talk into reading? They will remain ignoramuses.

At the beginning of the school year they come dashing in to us with lists for home reading. A very great deal is 'not done' at school, or it is 'done' very late. 'Great geographical discoveries' used to be done in the seventh year, but now they're done at the end of the sixth. These are only the discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The geographical discoveries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are a tremendous blank for many of them, as great probably as the blank on nineteenth-century maps of the Arctic.

I really don't understand how it is possible, on finishing secondary school, never to have heard of Einstein, Joliot-Curie or Fleming (true, they are acquainted to some degree with the names of Russian scientists). In the long run this can be left to take care of itself. But then some will learn and others won't. One may come of an intellectual family that has a large library of its own. The parents of another, though not themselves well educated, may have succeeded in encouraging a love of reading in him, a love of science and of art. A third won't get beyond books 'about spies', 'about war', or those 'on the list'. The first and second kinds of pupil are considered special and developed, while we are called upon to treat the third on an equal footing. How can that be done?

For this third group the authority of the school is incontestably negative. 'We haven't done that!' 'That's not in our textbook'.

What about those home reading lists? Why don't you teachers recommend well-known, talented, popularly written books on your subjects? Have you read any of them yourselves? Do you think your textbooks have been compiled in an ideal way? Or do you think that your pupils don't need to know more than is in the textbook? One might think that the authors of textbooks had quite forgotten what readers they were writing for, so dry and uninteresting is the way they have compiled the books from which knowledge is to be drawn by

people who, because of their age, flee from everything uninteresting, dry and boring.

And so we find that quite often they take out books from the 'list' and books 'for themselves'. The books they take out 'for themselves' prove to be more interesting; if the reader just sticks to the school list he develops into a person with little knowledge and a restricted outlook.

A girl of fifteen asks for *Anna Karenina*. She anticipates my questions. She has read *The Cossacks*, and *War and Peace*, and all of Turgenev. I am reluctant to give her a line.

'We have *Anna Karenina*, you know, but I can't give it to you. It's considered too grown-up for you.'

She pleads, and I would very much like to let her have it. . . . And come what may I give it to her. Let her get to love Tolstoy before they begin to 'do' him.

Incidentally, who began to lay down what is prescribed reading and what is not? When? Which experts on teaching method? Who had the bright idea of more or less following in the footsteps of the old gymnasium, where Leo Tolstoy was regarded as an immoral author and banned?

'May I read *The Charterhouse of Parma* (or *The Man Who Laughed* or *Twelve Chairs* or *Little Golden Calf*)?' from time to time come wails from the best-read youngsters, adolescents, lads and girls.

'No, kids, unfortunately not. It's too soon for you to read them', we are compelled to reply.

The very words 'too soon to read' already wound the adolescent, as though marking him out as unequal and not worthy of respect.

I don't care if I am penalised, or moved from my job, but there's not an expert on method who can prove to me that *War and Peace* is simpler and more easily understood than *Anna Karenina*. That it is harmful for an adolescent to read *The Charterhouse of Parma* or *Ordeal*. That he will not be able to understand *The Man Who Laughed*. Not everyone, of course, will understand—but surely it is impossible to keep them all on the same diet. And who decreed that *The Nebula of Andromeda* and *Magellan's Cloud* are novels in which the social fantasy predominates over the science fiction? Or that the satirical *Stellar Diaries of Ion the Quiet* is more within their grasp? And after all, are *Faust*, *Hamlet* and *Don Quixote* really easier to understand? Yet youngsters read both the permitted Shakespeare and the not-permitted Stendhal—and read them with pleasure—and the permitted Balzac and not-permitted Maupassant, that bogey of schoolmasters of all ages.

It would not hurt to recall that Pushkin and his coevals were reading Voltaire at the age of fourteen or fifteen—and in the original at that. It goes without saying that we do not have Voltaire on our shelves. Tolstoy was reading Rousseau at sixteen. But Tolstoy and Pushkin were geniuses. Take a simpler example: Alexandra Brustein's *Spring*. At the beginning of our century, Sashenka Yanovskaya and her girl friends from intellectual families—not, however, those of geniuses—discussed with adults and knew the details of the Dreyfus Case, themselves gave lessons, and read forbidden literature.

Where does this fear come from? Why this 'they won't understand, it's beyond their grasp'? Why must all adolescents be treated like fools?

Of course, if a person is brought up for a long time on the pap of 'what is good and what is bad' it is hardly likely that he will be able later on to sort out independently what is 'good' and what is 'bad' in life. Honestly, let him find his way about for himself, let him think a bit for himself, and ponder on life, on its obvious simplicity and hidden complexity. Why should we consider our children more stupid than the best people of their own age in the past? Why should the ideas, the thoughts, the emotions of mankind be beyond their grasp?

It does not follow that because pap is the best feed for an infant it can and should also be given to fifteen-year-olds. Otherwise they will find tremendous difficulty later on in digesting the solid food of adults.

We librarians guide children further and further onward from the first class to the eighth; and then we suggest that they transfer to an adult library. But we are faced with an absurdity that is very painful: for years, often from their pre-school days, we study the children, we know how they live, we know which of them are not yet ready for an independent choice of books, because either of their youth or of their mental development. There are children, of course, whom it is accepted to regard as developed. Their taste in literature has been educated; they know a lot and read good books. But these clever children, as I have already said, are considered as something special; it is those who are average today who will be backward tomorrow. It is high time we stopped regarding normally developed people as exceptions.

But I cannot remain indifferent to the fate of those average ones whom we frankly have not been able to cope with. We didn't have time to cope, but we could have, and we have already started.

There are those who won't come of themselves and ask for *Anna Karenina* or *The Red and the Black*. The boys will ask for 'thrillers' and sci-fic, the girls for 'something about school, about friendship' (for which read 'love').

In itself that's not so very terrible. It is necessary to read sci-fic and 'about love'; but what is to be done when they aren't interested in anything else? The world is immense. There are masses of books. It is impossible to read all of them, let alone the very best. And here we have a young fifteen-year-old lad who only recognises books about adventures on other planets. A sixteen-year-old girl doesn't want to look at anything except 'school stories'. But there are heaps of good books they haven't read. Well, they'll grow and they'll choose books for themselves—but will they find, will they read, that one book that determines his character and way of life for every person for a long time to come?



I AM convinced that these are not purely librarians', professional, problems. Like questions of upbringing and education, they do not just affect the school, and they are not just of interest to it. What adolescents and young people read and their attitude to art and literature are extremely important questions for everyone.

In Moscow there is an organisation called the Children's Libraries Pool. It is a kind of bookshop, where librarians indent for books once a month. What they have in the main, it seems, are the books of the 'Kindergarten Library' series, a great many books for the junior age group, and many less for teenagers, especially when it comes to modern books. At any rate, that is how our library gets its books. A 100th reprint of *About Thomas*, the classic children's poem *Down the Road Comes a Three-ton Lorry*, and one solitary copy of L. Grossman's book about Pushkin, three copies of Djivelegov on Michelangelo, and two copies of Frank's book about Cervantes. But not a single copy of Medynsky's *Honour* (it was published by the Soviet Writer Press, which is not a children's publishing house). Not a copy of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Not a copy of *Cruelty*. All these books were in the bookshops, but we had no authority to buy from them.

Perhaps this system has advantages? No. The pool has only books issued by children's publishing houses, a few from the Young Guard Press, and the special children's editions of the Soviet Russia Press. The most interesting books pass us by, and we can do nothing about it: Tvardovsky's *Distance Beyond Distance*, Panova's *Valya* and *Volodya*, *Mary Stuart*, *Cyrano de Ber-*

gerac (I recall how in the eighth year we used to copy it out by hand during classes), and a great many more. We're like the fox in the vineyard!

We do not give up hope, though. And a week before New Year the kind angels from the accounts department let us have some money, though only on account. We rush off to the bookshops. At last! At last we'll be able to buy what we need for the fifteen-year-olds and the fourteen-year-olds. We almost perform a wild dance of joy on reaching those Himalayas of the books. If only we had permission to go to the secondhand shops! But even without this, *Cruelty* and *Distance Beyond Distance* find their way onto the shelves alongside Vinogradov's *Stendhal*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and *Moby Dick*. During the year, however, many books have been sold out, and irretrievably lost to us are *The Life of Alexander Fleming*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, V. Lvov's *Einstein*, E. Stavsky's *Everything is Only Just Beginning*.

At that moment the last thing in our minds is what will be said to us, and how we are going to get these rather 'over-adult' books approved. Let our children and our lads and girls read the most varied and the most gifted books. Let them develop. That is what we want most.

—*Yunost*, 1962, No. 7.  
Translated by F.S.

## THE YOUTH OF TODAY

Viktor Rozov

**I**N ALL my plays and film scripts the main characters are young people—lads and girls. Naturally enough, while working on a play my thoughts are on life and the destinies not only of the characters of the play, but of our whole youth, from whose midst I draw the prototypes of my *dramatis personæ*.

The young people of our times are so tremendously interesting!

First of all, they are very different. Different to the point of contrast. They bubble and boil. Noisily and in many voices. They bubble and boil well. I see romantics and sceptics, frenzied characters and cautious ones, heroes and philistines. And though they are all so diverse and have so many different voices, the youth of our day are surprisingly united in a single entity.

The youth of today are the third generation of our young society. I make this division rather loosely. I simply count off three periods of twenty years each since the revolution and civil war. It was in those periods, I find, that each generation was most fully replaced by the next.

The first generation of Soviet youth were the lads and girls of the civil war period. They were the children of workers, peasants and the revolutionary intelligentsia. With little or no education they defended our new-born republic of workers and peasants, arms in hand, with pure hearts and flaming courage. The main hero of those years was the passionate champion of Soviet power, the destroyer of the old world and the reformer of the new administration, economy and culture. Millions of young people studied fractions for the first time, and learned that there had been such a man as Shakespeare. It was a time of great discoveries both in minor things and major ones, and the youth drank avidly of everything that was new.

The young man of the second generation—the late Thirties—was another type altogether. In two decades the country had traversed a complex and interesting road, building a new society and thereby giving shape to a new man. The law of universal free education yielded results, and we—I write 'we' because I



belonged to that generation—appeared from the outset far more cultured and educated than our predecessors. We had never handled revolvers or rifles, but we knew all about hammers, spades, slide rules, pencils and copy-books.

We knew that in the first years of the revolution the young people had rejected neckties, bows, silk garments, hats, *eau de Cologne* and perfume, waltzes and the *pas d'Espagne*. Even a carefully shaven face roused suspicion as to one's moral and social make-up. I recall so well the way we young people of the late Thirties were reproached by the grown-ups for our 'flighty' attitude to life, and how by then Pavel Korchagin and other youths and girls of former years (i.e. of their own young generation) were cited as models for us to follow. Watching us dancing the foxtrot and the tango, the 'old boys' shook their heads grimly, saying sententiously: 'Aye, no good will come of you. You young people are made of flimsier stuff. . . . Now, when we were your age . . .'. And so on. Many did not seem to realise then that it was by the work of millions of youths and girls who saw nothing terrible in the tango and ties that Magnitogorsk and Komsomolsk-on-Amur were built.

Then World War II broke out; and we, who had devoted our being to creative labour, shouldered arms. We shouldered them at the bidding of our hearts, conscience and ideals. We defended not only our country, but the gains of our revolution also. And in fact the youth of the late Thirties turned out to be worthy heirs of the ideals of the youth of the first years of the revolution and civil war. To their lot fell the job of defending, together with the older generation, the freedom and independence of their country against fascist invasion. Streets, squares and schools in many cities of the Soviet Union have been named after the heroes of this second younger generation. Those streets and cities, and thousands of factories, mines and collective farms, were themselves raised from the ashes in a short period by the hands and talent of that generation.

Another two decades have elapsed, and a new generation has appeared. If we take the picture of the young man of the times of the civil war and compare it with that of the young man of our day, what a striking difference we shall find! In what way are our present-day youth unique? What are their ideals and sorrows? What are they trying to achieve? And finally, what exploits can we expect from them?

The main feature distinguishing our present-day youth, to my mind, is their profound interest in human psychology and their heightened intolerance towards everything that interferes with decent living. The traditional yearning for education has grown into a universal aspiration for knowledge.

I recall being told, at a meeting with students of the Likhachov Motor Works University of Culture in Moscow, that the workers of leading shops who received high wages used to be unwilling to attend schools for young workers, but were now anxious to study. Not because that would raise their qualifications—and their wages—but simply because the ignorant found life too tedious and boring.

While visiting Bulgaria I heard someone say: 'One has to study to see far'. The desire to study is no longer stimulated now by need or by financial considerations, but just by that passion for seeing far. The youth understand that that is one of the great joys of living.

Often when meeting young people today I am overwhelmed by their capacity to grasp the latest scientific conceptions, which to the settled mind of the adult are either almost impossible to understand or absolutely baffling.

Increasingly young people's choice of profession is determined not by the principle of 'Where will it be most profitable for me to work after finishing school?' but by one's own wishes or vocation. Sometimes one even has to take a second course of studies. My nephew, for example, attended an automobile engineering institute. By the time he reached the third year he suddenly realised

he had made a mistake in the choice of his profession. He was now more interested in mathematics. And so carried away was he by his new passion that after finishing at the engineering institute he studied the university course of mathematics on his own and went to work not in a motor works but in a computer department.

Another distinctive feature of our youth is their heightened interest in human psychology, their desire to make themselves fine and perfect. I regard that as an exceedingly precious trait, because I have always believed that nothing causes as much suffering as man does to man, and man does to himself.

How did that heightened interest in human psychology appear? A Soviet writer has very aptly noted that when we began to erect the building of the new society there was a great deal of debris and rubbish inside and out. We did not have enough hands to clear up the mess, and half of it remained in the building. Now the time has come to get rid of it.

Can man be changed? Can the layers of thousands of years of degradation be peeled off? Should we believe that man is born as clean as the white sheet of paper upon which, Rousseau said, anything could be written? Or is it true that man is mean, spiteful, greedy and egoistic from birth? Personally, I am deeply convinced that he is born neither an angel nor a devil. And yet he is born both. What takes the upper hand? That is where the influence of environment, family and society and the influence of education prove decisive.

Through Hamlet Shakespeare said that his ideal was a man who had learned to control his passions. I like that idea very much. Man's will power is the horse-man, and his passion is the steed. The wilder the steed the more difficult it is to control it, and the stronger the horseman's hand—his will power—must be. Our education is directed not only at cultivating his emotions but, perhaps above all, at training the human will.

I have digressed somewhat from my discussion of the youth, but it is precisely our present-day youth that warmly believes in the possibility of changing man, that his character can be improved. When I wrote the play *In Search of Happiness* it was my intention to find the answer to the question: What are a person's real joys and what his mere pleasures? I found that the overwhelming majority of pleasures were bound up with money, whereas you could not buy real human joy for any amount of cash.

In the process of building their characters, young people take an interest in absolutely everything. The Moscow Central Children's Theatre sent its senior age group audience questionnaires which asked, among other things, 'What moves you most at the present time?' I shall quote one of the more striking answers: 'You want to know what moves me? I could tell you that I am interested in the future of my generation, and, naturally, in my own future, that I am stirred by Prokofiev's music, Sandberg's verse, Yves Montand's voice, and Papuan statues in Tahiti. And that would be telling the truth. But it isn't all. There are the lovely paintings of Japan, and the rockets that fly to outer space, and there were the Middle Ages. . . . One must simply live without trying to look for a quiet life. . . . That is what I think'. That was written by Viktor Ilyushechkin, a fifteen-year-old pupil of the ninth form of School No. 11 in Moscow.

Glancing through a pile of these questionnaires, I was delighted to see how broad was the range of interests of our youth, how great the degree of their desire for knowledge and of their demands on themselves.

Love, friendship, duty, vocation, recreation, mutual relations with grown-ups, literature, art, clothes—everything, absolutely everything, from the meaning of life to the fashion in shoes, comes within the range of their interests.

Not long ago I received a letter from a group of architectural students. They asked me to help them get permission to build a city according to their plans

and drawings. They intended to gather together a big group of enthusiasts, build the city with their own hands, settle down in it, and live there in accordance with the highest ethical standards.

It may be said that theirs was sheer youthful romanticism. Perhaps. But it is the romanticism of joy, an effective and constructive romanticism, not that of the old world of adventures. This enthusiasm of the young builders of a new world arises naturally from the very atmosphere of creative work in which our whole country lives and thrives.

But haven't we also a different sort of youth? Of course we have. There are young careerists, and shallow philistines for whom their own ego is the centre of the universe, and pampered morons who want to live a fast life, and lastly criminals. But all of them taken together are but a drop in comparison with the heaving ocean of the young people who are studying and working. Yet even that drop should worry us adults, since spiritual diseases are often infectious.

I should like to mention the section of the youth, however, who are now arousing great discussion among us.

Going by outward appearance (the smart, fashionable clothes of young people), some of our 'old boys' mistakenly want to put them in the category of 'teddy boys'. But 'teddy boys' are inane youths in whose empty skulls no fresh or deep thoughts circulate. Their range of interests is of the lowest, and consists of nothing but dances, restaurants, boozing and petty hooliganism. There is nothing new in that. In seventeenth-century Russia there were also 'teddy boys'; they were called 'dandies' and derided in the satirical magazines.

The young people I have in mind are not 'teddy boys'. Most of them are well developed intellectually, and interested in music, painting and the latest scientific achievements.

It is characteristic of our youth to criticise our faults, and to criticise them openly and without embarrassment. The youth of our day is marked perhaps by a particular intolerance towards everything that is ugly and interferes with living. There are, I think, two reasons for that. I mentioned one of them above: genuine erudition leads to a heightened ethical demand on others and on oneself. The second reason lies in the struggle against the consequences of the Stalin personality cult. The change that has taken place in our society since the 20th and 22nd Congresses of the Party, the democratisation of life and the open criticism of the faults engendered by the cult, have all created new conditions for the youth. The young people of whom I am speaking are particularly intolerant of bureaucracy, hypocrisy, ranting and red tape. This type of youth, whom, I repeat, we have no grounds to confuse with 'teddy boys' can be found among students and workers, and in the sciences and the arts. The other day I met young workers of the Likhachov Motor Works and found this type of boy and girl among them. I qualify all the features mentioned above, down to the desire to dress smartly, as positive features.

What is negative about this section of our youth? What is it about them that makes us sit up and take notice?

Their main fault (the one, alas, that we come across most frequently) is probably their disrespect for adults, including their closest relatives. There can be an explanation of that, but no justification. Their youthful zeal sometimes becomes overbearing; and whereas any manifestation of overbearing is extremely unpleasant in an adult, in youths and girls it is simply revolting. Another negative feature is the limitation of their judgment; and I dislike their blustering show of erudition. My greatest worry is that these young people may let themselves be carried away to the point of becoming worse than those they are criticising. When young wine ferments, that is fine; it means the beverage will be excellent. But the young soon grow up, and if old wine begins to ferment it is spoiled, soured, and must be poured down the drain.

I am convinced that the youth of the third generation are as true to our ideals as the young men and women of former years. Perhaps they are luckier. Not only are they participating in the building of communist society, but they will also be its full-fledged and happy citizens. We, their predecessors, are not envious of them, however. Our time, too, was interesting in its own way, and we have not done our bit so badly. But if our youth of today is destined to undergo terrible experiences, which God forbid, their names will be given to the streets and squares of the new cities that will undoubtedly rise anew on earth.

At the beginning of this article I asked myself what we could expect from today's youth, not just as a matter of day-dreaming, but from observing them and trying to understand them. First of all, we can expect a further dynamic surge in the development of new communist relations and in the strengthening of human ethics; we can expect great creative achievements in science and work for the people's sake. I am sure they will do that, because I like today's youth; I am even in love with them, as a matter of fact.

I am sure the young will show their best side. There is still so much to do! And life is so interesting!

—*Smena*, 1963, No. 1.

### Tamara Makarova

EVER SINCE the film *Men and Beasts*\* was released I have been unable to keep up with replies to people who saw it. I get letters from parents, daughters and sons, from all kinds of people with every type of experience in life, all sorts of views.

The letters that I like best of all are those that come from young filmgoers. I got one such just recently. A girl wrote that having seen the film she realised how all these years she had been unjust to her mother, and that whatever her mother had done for her (even when it entailed great difficulties) she had always taken it as her due.

So often these days we hear what has become rather a cliché from mothers and grandmothers who spoil their children and indulge them excessively: 'We had such a hard life ourselves—let them have it a bit easier.' Later these same women complain in bewilderment and sorrow of the incomprehensible demands and egoism of their children, to whom they have devoted their lives with such self-sacrifice and selflessness. Generally speaking this does not concern exceptionally badly behaved young people. On the contrary! Usually they are not bad people, but good comrades, folk with serious interests, often quite well educated.

It must be confessed that some of our post-war generation have one trait in common: they take for granted everything that is given to them by the country, society, and their family. More, they take a supercilious, condescending attitude to the older generation and to their workaday past, which was often replete with struggle and suffering.

Like many others, I often wonder whether we do the right thing in doing everything we can to ease the path for the young people, protecting them from difficulties, 'paving the way' for them.

It was these ideas that I wished to put across from the screen. That was how I got the idea for the libretto of *Men and Beasts* and its leading characters: Anna Andreyevna, who had lived through the tragedy of the siege of Leningrad, and her daughter Tanya, who as a tiny child during the war found herself living in the occupied zone with strangers. By the time Anna Andreyevna found

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\* Tamara Makarova wrote the libretto on which *Men and Beasts* is based, and played the rôle of the mother Anna Andreyevna in the film. Her husband, Sergei Gerasimov, produced it.

her girl she was eight years old. The mother's longing to win the child's love after the long separation was only natural. But we find that Anna, a working woman who has experienced the harsh school of life, has to her own astonishment brought up a spoiled, capricious girl.

My experience of life told me that no speculative talks or exhortations could change Tanya's view of the world. She needed to be brought up against a concentration of life, a human fate, which would sweep away her indifference. This was particularly the case since Tanya, in my concept as the author, was in essence clever, sensitive, and by nature active. All this, however, needed to be awakened, stirred and directed along the lines of active relation with reality.

And now, with the film *Men and Beasts* released on the screens, reading the press and the many letters received, I come again and again to the conclusion that the subject we chose does not leave people indifferent.

—*Rabotnitsa*, 1962, No. 11.

### Sergei Gerasimov

**Y**OUNG PEOPLE always think that they are discoverers and that only they understand the actual essence of the truth, while all others are blinded by prejudice, tiredness and other sins ascribed by the younger generation to the more mature one. In personal and family relations this is manifest in the daily struggle which invariably develops during the process of education of a young man by his father and mother.

Analysing the film *Ilyich Zastava*\*, N. S. Khrushchov started with its title. This is quite logical, since such a title, as was quite properly pointed out, puts great demands on those who produce it. It should be realised in this case that the restoration of the Leninist principles in our Party means not only the restoration of the rights of the individual in a community, but also the restoration and establishment of a deeper conception of the individual's duty in the community. Thus the right to criticise, first of all, implies that both the criticism made and the critic himself should be socially useful. Otherwise we get fake criticism, which, as is generally known, has never had and never will have anything in common with Leninist principles.

According to the plans of the film's authors, it was supposed to deal with the way the young people today understand their role in building communism. This is a vast problem, with a multitude of aspects. However, in this case one should always proceed from the criterion of the significance of the contribution actually made by this or that member of our community of working men to the people's cause. In this case the enthusiasm of exposure of the phenomena inherited from the personality cult cannot and should not blur the progressive development of our society, which day after day and hour after hour keeps erecting the edifice of the new world of communism. The real truth of our reality is in this daily persistent and all-conquering work which is passed on from one generation to another. Everything else is subordinated to this and has no right to play the leading role in truthful art, because it does play a leading role in life itself. Such are the dialectics of the development of our life, and herein lie its force and beauty. It is from this angle that the relations between the generations should be tested, between the fathers and the children. It should not be forgotten in this connection that the very fact of the preservation of free

\* This film was made by a group of young film makers under the technical supervision of Gerasimov. N. S. Khrushchov's criticism was also directed at Gerasimov for having been lax in exercising this supervision.



creative life for the sons and daughters is the direct result of the victory, unparalleled as to its courage and magnitude, won by their grandfathers in October 1917 and in the battles of the civil war, and later by their fathers in the war against fascism. If, having started assessing life since the day of your birth, you forget this it will mean that you forget this major feature, and thereby again distort the truth of history.

It was actually the fact that the young artists forgot the most important foundations of the history of our society that prevented them from producing their film frankly and courageously in keeping with its name. As a result serious mistakes and miscalculations were made, and these were exposed with passion and conviction by N. S. Khrushchov.

Did we help them to produce this film in proportion with the magnitude of its name? Speaking with principled Party approach, it must be said that we did not help them to the end.

Excuses could be found to the effect that the job of working with the young generation is a difficult one. However, this does not remove the responsibility from the person in charge, who has the advantage of age and experience. Being self-critical, it should be said that we, the people in charge of this work, and I among them, failed to have imperative influence in the creative process and to stop completely the unhealthy excitement connected with this still uncompleted film to which not enough thought had been devoted.

On closer inspection it came out that the authors of the film actually lacked those serious lessons which man derived in society with the inevitable feeling of responsibility for every thought expressed most exhaustively by the Party leadership. There can be no doubt that this lesson will have a profound effect, serving as a stimulus for a new assessment of oneself, of life, of art and of one's place in art and in life. These are austere times when the battle is being waged for man's conscience, for the conscience of youth; and every artist is a front-line fighter in this battle. In such conditions attempts to remain in the rear are just as shameful as conceit, self-praise and over-estimation of one's own personality.

Can the authors of *Ilyich Zastava*, having discarded all the premature laudatory clamour, start working for the complete and decisive victory of their film? To my mind they certainly can. Things should be done in such a way that the whole film, relieved of introversion and the useless process of marking time, would acquire an impact and lead youth to the Ilyich Zastava. This is a matter of honour for the young authors; a matter of honour for the film producing group and its management; a matter of honour for the Gorky Film Studio.

—*Izvestia*, March 13, 1963.

# Moscow Newsletter

## FANFARE FOR A FESTIVAL

Robert Daglish

IT MAY be true that film festivals tend to be the same the world over. Certainly they mean a spate of publicity, pretty speeches, posing for photographs and all the rest of the paraphernalia that stars and producers may not enjoy but cannot do without. But I do not think anyone who was in Moscow this summer for the Third International Film Festival left with the impression that there was more of it here than elsewhere, or even that 'propaganda' took the place of publicity. In fact, the festival attracted so much spontaneous interest among the Soviet public that the organisers had far more to do coping with crowds and arranging a more or less fair distribution of tickets than whipping up enthusiasm.

The system of season tickets for the whole festival is obviously not the most satisfactory for the viewer who would like to choose one or two of the best films, but it is the only way of ensuring that the minor film-producers get a fair share of the audience. The surprising thing is that so many people in Moscow were able and willing to fork out half a week's wages for a daily diet of films they knew very little about beforehand. This does not mean, of course, that people were not free to select. The season tickets covered both major and minor entries, and at three other cinemas besides the Congress Palace there were daily showings of competition and out-of-competition films for huge audiences who bought tickets for the picture of their choice at the box-office in the usual way.

At the first Moscow festival in 1959 films were shown in two rather old and stuffy cinemas with seating for not more than 5,000. This year, with the huge Congress Palace, the even bigger Palace of Sport and two first-class modern cinemas at its disposal, the festival committee was able to cater for something like 40,000 people a day. *Hors-de-concours* productions included *Billy Budd*, *This Sporting Life* and *Heavens Above!* from Britain, *The Devil and the Ten Commandments*, *Judgment at Nuremberg*, *West Side Story*, *Some Like It Hot*, and *The Stones of Hirshoma*.

Guest producers and stars were, of course, feted. Peter Ustinov, more interested in seeing the land of his fathers than other film-makers, wished he had been in Moscow at any other time, but many visitors found time to get around and see the people. Some, like Danny Kaye, who are hardly known here, found anonymity a refreshing experience; after a couple of days in Moscow he was writing for *Festival Sputnik* (a glossy illustrated brought out by the committee every day in Russian, French and English): 'Believe it or not, the communists are just as capable of laughing as the guy next door.'

It is impossible, of course, to sum up reaction to entries from all fifty-six countries that took part, but the impact that some of the better-known films, particularly those from the West, had on Soviet audiences and critics is worth trying to describe. Though it had most of the features one would expect to appeal to a Russian audience—small boy abroad, exotic scenery, adventure—*Sammy Going South* seemed to fall rather flat. Press reaction was a mere ripple of polite acknowledgment.

The British film that did make an impression was *This Sporting Life*. Having already won a prize at Cannes, it had to be shown out of competition, otherwise it would almost certainly have got a prize here. Actually, I was not expecting

such a positive reaction from audiences. The Soviet public has heard a good deal about the evils of professionalism in sport, and the attitude to foreign films on this subject that cash in on violence is summed up in the rather contemptuous slang *mordoboichik* (knock-about). Moscow audiences nowadays are also rather wary of films with an obviously 'correct' political message, and would yawn over a mere recital of the horrors of life under capitalism. But Lindsay Andersen's almost documentary directing, his avoidance of what the Russians call *shtamp* (stereotype), and the intensity of Richard Harris's acting, touched some very deep chord of human feeling and roused a kind of man-to-man sympathy. In the past year or two a number of oldish but good British comedies, like *Woman in a Dressing Gown*, *Carlton Brown of the F.O.* and *Laughter in Paradise*, have been enjoyed here and have given British films a high reputation for light humour. This makes *Sporting Life* even more of a breakthrough. Though I do not think it will ever compete in popularity with the highly successful *Room at the Top*, it has certainly shown Moscow a new aspect of British cinema.

Films from the West that touched on the war also roused great interest. *The Boys from Finland*, an intimate study of Finnish youth in the years when Finland was an ally of Nazi Germany, was well received. It made no attempt to paint the Germans in atrocious colours, and for a large part of the film the boys are either thrilled by their ally's military reputation or eager to trade in beer and cigarettes; but the gradual erosion of their spirits under war conditions is skilfully shown, though at a rather slow pace. The director, incidentally, received his training at the Moscow Institute of Cinematography.

The real test of Soviet objectivity, however, came with the showing of the main American entry, *The Great Escape*. Though in one way it offered a political advantage in that it bore out a great deal of what has been said about the easier war fought by the Americans and British, Soviet critics just could not accept that any treatment of prisoners by the Germans could have been as correct and gentlemanly as shown in this picture. *Sovetskaya kul'tura* led off with an explosive attack called 'Playing at War,' and was followed by *Literaturnaya gazeta*, though in milder terms and giving credit to the expert making of this film (Steve Macqueen got a festival prize for acting), and emphasising the final tragedy when fifty of the prisoner-of-war officers were shot after recapture. *Pravda*, however, came out in defence of the film and dismissed the *Sovetskaya kul'tura* approach as 'rough and inappropriate'. I felt that even *Pravda* was too eager to excuse the film by underlining its harsher aspects instead of recognising the value, in suspense, of building up slowly to final tragedy. On the other hand, the American delegation were wrong at their press conference only to be glad that Soviet newspapers differ occasionally (an attitude almost as revealing as Danny Kaye's remark). There were times when John Sturges's slick direction swerved away from reality; and the film's biggest failing surely was that in this big prisoner-of-war camp there were only courage and perfect devotion on the American and British side, with not a blemish of selfishness, and scarcely a trace of ordinary human weakness. This is not the stuff that great films are made of, but for some reason no one pointed that out.

Stanley Kramer, who was at the conference and probably could have done so, was kept busy answering other questions by Soviet journalists. He created a fine impression by his forthright desire for controversy, and made some interesting points about American cinema that may help Soviet critics to grasp what is, in fact, a complex and gradually changing situation. His main points were that the American cinema could no longer be regarded as something wholly or purely American, that American producers were making pictures in co-operation with film-makers of other countries all over the world. He claimed that producers were getting away from large-studio operation and beginning to work in smaller units, with consequent greater freedom. In answer to a question

about 'think' pictures and 'commercials' he refused to recognise the two categories and insisted that any really good film (he did not exclude musicals) could become a box-office success. On some points he obviously failed to convince his audience. Asked what problems American cinema should tackle, he unhesitatingly placed the Negro issue at the top of the list, but pointed out that the cinema's task was not to win rights for the American Negro but to insist that the rights he already enjoys under the Constitution are actually implemented. Soviet journalists, on the other hand, argued that Kramer's own picture *The Unconquered*, shown in Moscow during the festival, did not confirm this. Determined to make his point clear, Kramer went on to draw a parallel by saying that a great number of rights for Soviet citizens had been proclaimed after the victory of the October revolution and that since then the struggle had been to see that those rights were enjoyed by every citizen. This again was not accepted by his Soviet questioners; but one felt that even this brief hour's press conference had shown that with people of Kramer's calibre on one side and lively minds like Zakharchenko on the other this festival would not pass without some useful discussion.

One illusion it helped to destroy was that the majority of Soviet films concentrate on saying, as an American distributor put it to me: 'How glorious it is to be a Soviet citizen.' *Unnecessary Journey* (*Porozhny reis*), the best Soviet entry, which was awarded a silver medal, paints a harsh picture of life in Siberia and cracks down hard on an unscrupulous official who tries to cover his own shady dealings by entrusting the life of an investigating journalist to a lorry driver who will be the first to suffer if these dealings are exposed. It is typical of the average run of Soviet films lately.\*

It is to be hoped, however, that more producers will take up the kind of big theme that Mikhail Romm tackled in *Nine Days of One Year*.

The award of the festival grand prize to Fellini for *Eight and a Half* was probably one of the most controversial artistic decisions ever taken in Moscow.

It was not, it should be remembered, a purely Soviet decision. The festival jury was made up just about equally of representatives from the socialist and capitalist worlds, but it would be a mistake to assume that the voting went on a purely political basis. A day before the award was announced Yuri Zhukov published an article in *Literaturnaya gazeta* in which he spoke with great respect for Fellini's work but said quite plainly that he considered *Eight and a Half* a step back from such fine films as *Nights of Cabiria* and *La Strada*. At the Italian delegation's press conference Zakharchenko expressed his admiration for Fellini's daring in tackling what he called 'the biggest of all themes', the creative process itself. I have spoken to Soviet people who had no reservation about calling it a great and exalting film, and to others who found it intellectual and cold, while acknowledging its technical brilliance. At the Palace of Sport showing some people walked out bewildered. Now that the film is to be bought and widely distributed in the USSR, I hope we shall see some close analysis of both its technical and philosophical aspects. When it has been properly dubbed in Russian, it is possible that its apparent ambiguity (which Fellini himself emphatically denies) will disappear. In any case, the debate it will arouse is bound to have a stimulating effect on Soviet film-making.

After the showing was over I strolled through the gates with the thousands who had packed the great new hall in the Kremlin grounds. As I mingled with

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\* Whether these films would sell in the West, in the face of television pressure, is another question. They would probably appeal only to people with a specific interest in Soviet problems. But those who want more cultural exchanges of this kind should consider the possibilities of the Soviet documentary on television and of really grappling with the problem of dubbing foreign films well enough to make them acceptable to an English audience. The reverse process is done extremely well in the USSR through very close co-operation between translators and actors.

this crowd of Soviet people and foreign visitors from all over the world I wondered how many were sharing my thoughts. When I first saw the Kremlin fourteen years ago it was the closed residence of a man who had placed himself far above any such democratic international function. The idea of a world film festival in the Kremlin in those days would have seemed fantastic. This year, coinciding as it did with the publication of the Soviet and Chinese statements in *Pravda*, the festival was even more a symbol of international give-and-take, of the true self-confidence that is revealed in a desire to see what others have achieved, and to submit one's own achievements to the judgment of the world.

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## Communication

*The following letter has been received from Professor Richard Hare with reference to Mr. David Craig's review of his book Maxim Gorky: Romantic Realist and Conservative Revolutionary:*

**I**N A NOTICE about my book on Maxim Gorky, published in the spring issue of your journal, your reviewer wrote that I call Lenin 'a philistine'.

I should point out that I made no such statement in my book. And I would be glad if you would publish this letter in order to correct the inaccuracy of your review.

Yours sincerely,

Professor RICHARD HARE.

*Mr. Craig has replied:*

**I**N MY REVIEW the word 'philistine' was my own; it was not a quotation from Professor Hare's book, for my criticism was that what Professor Hare said about Lenin's relations with Gorky *amounted to* calling Lenin philistine, i.e. someone concerned with brute power-politics to the exclusion of human decency and the finer points of taste and truth.

My grounds for this are Professor Hare's assertions that Lenin believed might was right; that he was a 'brazen opportunist' in using theory as a tool; that he was 'rude' in saying Gorky's ideas of 'God-building' were 'not worth discussing'; and his repeating of an (obviously apocryphal) anecdote to the effect that Lenin told Gorky that politics were 'a dirty business' (pp. 63, 75, 79, 151).

Is it not clear that this amounts to a picture of Lenin as a philistine in the sense originated by Matthew Arnold (*Culture and Anarchy*, ch. 3), viz. the type who makes an enemy 'of the children of light or servants of the idea' and prefers such crude tasks as 'organising themselves, through trade unions and other means, so as to constitute . . . a great working-class power'?

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### Treatment of Delinquency in the USSR (*concluded from page 27*)

One final contrast between penal institutions in the Soviet Union and in England must be mentioned—we were given permission to take cameras into the camp and absolute freedom to photograph anything we wished. At the same time, however, we were accompanied throughout by the official camp photographer (an inmate whose trade this was outside), and were thereby turned from being observers into being observed. For the writer, at any rate, this was an unusual sensation, arousing acute feelings of sympathy for the inmates subjected to our scrutiny, and a lively sense, among all that was strange and novel, of our common humanity.



# Surveys and Reviews

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## GLIMPSES OF EISENSTEIN

Christopher Brunel

IF FILM production were just a glamour industry with no roots, one could deal rather lightly with the thousands who want to find jobs in it every year. But films are very close to the people—they (with television) are the art of the millions: rich, poor, intellectuals and lumpen alike. The nature of the cinema with its reflection of real life (even if sometimes distorted or exaggerated), causes audiences to want to imitate what they see on the silver screen; and it also causes the large numbers of aspiring film-makers either to wish to imitate the work of the masters or to feel that they would like to express themselves in their own way on film.

In Britain those desires are not met—and, indeed, cannot be met fully for economic reasons at the root of the problems of film financing, which are outside the scope of this review. As a result, not only are many individuals' careers frustrated, but the industry is cut off from the enriching talents of brains that, given the training and finance, could transform it into a strong and even more valuable asset to the nation.

From the State Institute of Cinematography in Moscow come some tantalising glimpses of a different ordering of things, and these glimpses come in Vladimir Nizhny's *Lessons With Eisenstein*.<sup>\*</sup> For the great Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein was a man who loved to teach and to share his knowledge—and had the full opportunity of doing this.

But, if any of Eisenstein's pupils had any illusions of an easy drinking in of wisdom at the feet of the master, they would have been quickly jerked out of it and right into hard-thinking activity. A rapid picking over of a tiny part of Eisenstein's 'Programme for Teaching the Theory and Practice of Film Direction', given in this book as an appendix, includes boxing, voice-training, sketching from memory, and a study of personalities as varied as Lenin, Marx, Engels, Edison, Ford, Zola and Balzac. No room for the *diletante* here:

'Not one of the generally accepted academic methods of teaching', writes Eisenstein, 'is adequate for teaching the craft of film direction'. This is because film-making is an art, rightly requiring highly developed creative activity and craftsmanship. As Ivor Montagu remarks in his foreword, Eisenstein's erudition was no intellectual-snobbish display:

'The point is that Eisenstein really believed that guiding principles run through all artistic expression, that the widest possible study of them all provides the clue to perception of the determinants of the methods of the given art form—cinema, and that the profession of film director is (or at least can be) such a high and precious one that no one aspiring to it has any right to neglect *anything* that can make him a better man and film director.'

I am sure that, had Eisenstein been alive today, he would have borrowed the *News of the World's* current advertising slogan, 'All human life is here', and with justice applied it to his beloved cinema.

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<sup>\*</sup> *Lessons With Eisenstein*. Vladimir Nizhny, translated and edited by I. Montagu and Jay Leyda. (George Allen and Unwin. 182pp., illus. 25/-).

This valuable book consists of lecture-discussions given by Eisenstein at the State Cinema Institute in Moscow, based on actual stenograms and blackboard drawings. They were made by one of his young pupils, the late Vladimir Nizhny and are translated and edited by Ivor Montagu and Jay Leyda, two men—their own of a very high stature—who have lovingly lavished every care on the work of faithfully translating and constructively editing. How valuable to have translators with a plus is evidenced in the copious helpful notes—why, in two places I detected a footnote to a footnote! The appendix, to which I have already referred, also contains valuable information. Ivor Montagu has a foreword, and Jay Leyda adds an afterthought; and in these days when some publishers omit an index I must note that there is what appears to be a good one.

The meat of the book deals with story adaptation, action planning, break-up into shots, and arrangement of the entire action within the shot, with illustrations from Balzac's *Père Goriot*, Vandercook's *Black Majesty*, and Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The link between script work and direction is important, as Eisenstein regarded the director's work as a direct continuation of the creative work that begins with the scenario writer. The detailed attention that Eisenstein paid to the twin functions of story adapting and action planning, which he did with his class in such an analytical way, throws an interesting light on the current criticism of British films in some quarters that they suffer from being adaptations from other media rather than being original screen plays.

By its very nature this book is hard reading. Once picked up, to reverse the *cliché*, I found that I repeatedly put it down—and had a long period of thinking on what I had been reading. It is emphatically not a conventional textbook, in which one can find solutions to problems. Nizhny quotes Sergei Mikhailovich, talking about film-making:

'The aspect most important for me to put over is not the solution, but the method, the path, by which the director has to travel to reach the solution. Note that, reflect upon it, and talk to the students about it, too, in lesson time.'

And that epitomises the book, as Eisenstein all the while forces his students to think and work hard. A great part of the lesson periods is taken up with the fascinating discussion that Eisenstein conducted, the students constructing script approaches and their interpretation on to film in this manner. The reader, in turn, gets the excitement and exhilaration of this process.

The collective method, used in the classroom, works, and one wonders why it is not continued over from the Institute of Cinematography to the professional making of pictures, which, east and west, seem almost always to have an individual's personal stamp on them. The sole dictate of an individual is usually thought to be the only course towards true art in such fields as painting, sculpture and music—one who maintains that a committee could create a fine musical composition would find few supporters. But can the same be said of the creative functions (as distinct from interpretative ones) in the art of the cinema?

Eisenstein believed that a film director was simultaneously an architect, a poet, a painter, a composer, but above all a film artist in the most honourable and highest sense of the term—an *artist, thinking synthetically*, tracing out new paths, the untiring discoverer and creator of new forms that can shake the mind and the heart, and win the sympathy of the spectator. Is it, then, impossible to imagine a concerted effort, gaining strength from collective work, carrying out these functions and successfully producing great film?

I do not know the answer, but I know that, as well as the millions who are interested in the cinema as patrons (of whom I wrote at the opening of this review), increasing numbers of people in Britain are being enabled by cheap, efficient 8mm. film equipment to begin to come upon the problems of *creating* motion pictures. Such movies are no longer the sole province of the wealthy

amateur, but are within the pockets of large sections of the working class, who are used to solving so many of their problems in a collective manner.

## CAREFUL PORTRAITS

Edwin Morgan

THE SECOND instalment of Ehrenburg's *Men, Years—Life* continues his reminiscences from 1918, when he returned to Russia, to 1921 and the appearance of his satirical novel *Julio Jurenito*. Interesting and valuable as these memoirs undoubtedly are, it emerges more clearly than in the first volume (*People and Life*) that they have their limitations. The same method is followed by the author: a loose narrative with many digressions looking forward in time to the present, and spaced out within the narrative a series of well-developed 'portraits' of contemporaries such as Mayakovsky, Pasternak, Yesenin, Marina Tsvetayeva, Mandelshtam, Meyerhold, and Durov the great clown. Ehrenburg seems to have given himself a triple aim: to write some sort of autobiography, to evoke historical events he witnessed, and to portray and illuminate some famous and some neglected figures he had known.

It must be said that in all three aspects the reader will suffer some disappointment. The autobiography itself has a strange lack of solidity: scattered facts are presented, statements are made, but nothing adds up, and the personality that remains at the end of this volume is as elusive as ever. It may be said that this is the truth, that potential extremes and marked factors in Ehrenburg's character simply cancel each other out. Caginess is such an uncommon quality in Russian writers that when one comes across it, as most notably in these memoirs, one feels particularly unhappy about it. Can the man not speak out for once in his life and tell the whole story? Yet temperamentally it may be impossible for him to do so. Among the few revealing statements he makes about himself are these: 'By nature I am one of those people known as "Doubting Thomases"'; 'I have never in my life been a passionate adherent of any artistic school'; 'I searched for a hundred different truths and bewailed a world which had never been mine'. All this seems to result in a lack of convincing relationships both with people and towards events. If the relationships were in fact warm and close, this fails to emerge in the memoirs. Ehrenburg remains the observer, and neither a very painstaking nor a very penetrating one. Olga Carlisle said of him, in her interview published in 1961 in the *Paris Review*, that 'his eyes were exceedingly sharp and yet somehow incurious'. This fits in with his somewhat unfeeling and perfunctory account of events like the Kiev pogrom and the Baby Yar massacre. How one longs for some generous emotion of indignation or warning to break through the chill of his dutiful mention of these horrors!

Ehrenburg says of Pasternak that he 'never heard the footsteps of the age', and that in *Dr. Zhivago* 'too many pages are devoted to things the author never saw or heard'. It is ironical that Ehrenburg, who saw and heard plenty, seems even less able to rise to the occasion of the revolution and civil war than the vacillating Zhivago. Those who hope for a splendid re-creation of these years will find only an intermittent vividness punctuating too much chat and triviality. There is a good deal of this sort of thing:

'The poet Lipskerov read poems about the beauties of the Orient in a singsong voice. The poetess Vera Inber used to come. (I had met her in Paris; she had had to go to a moun-

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\* *First Years of Revolution, 1918-21*. Ilya Ehrenburg. Trans. Anna Bostock and Yvonne Kapp. (MacGibbon and Kee, 200pp. 25/-.)

tain sanatorium in Switzerland and asked me to look after the publication of her book *Sorrowful Wine*. My friend the sculptor Zadkine illustrated the book). She read flippant poems: "Willie, dear Willie, tell me quick: have you ever loved anybody, pageboy Willie?" I made friends with V.G. Lidin. As a young man he was naïve and longed for romanticism. Ludmila Dzhalalova called him "the pink marabou," and the nickname stuck.'

On the next page, this is how we are bumped back into 'history':

'The newspapers reported tremendous events: the German offensive, the Brest-Litovsk peace, the transfer of the government to Moscow, the revolt of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, the beginning of civil war on the Don. Shooting kept breaking out in Moscow. Anarchist headquarters sprang up in practically every house along Povarskaya. . . .'

On the other hand, there are some vividly described incidents here and there, such as the author's escape from the Crimea by barge during a storm, and his brief idyllic stay in Georgia with the poets Tabidze and Yashvili. But as far as offering new insights into these three terrible years of confusion, hunger, violence and counter-violence is concerned the author's documentary can hardly be said to present a powerful analysis. As he says himself near the beginning: 'In 1917 I found myself an observer, and it took me two years to realise the significance of the October revolution.' One admires such an admission; but it means that much of the main interest of the book lies elsewhere, and especially in the series of 'portraits' of literary and theatre acquaintances.

These portraits I would describe as careful rather than revelatory, and like most Soviet biography they are so chary of speculation that their subjects have a bad habit of fading from view at some crucial moment. It is obvious that Ehrenburg could say more than he does about the emotional life and eventual suicide of Mayakovsky; yet an evasiveness before tragic fact occurs also in his account of the fate of Tsvetayeva, of Mandelshtam, of Meyerhold and Tairov, of Tabidze and Yashvili. Whether the tragedy is personal or political, it is either blurred into poor focus or hurried past the reader as if to prevent awkward or indecent questioning. Despite this apparently inescapable lack of frankness, the reader will find many of the portrayals deeply interesting and moving; Ehrenburg does a service to the dead when he describes Tsvetayeva and her lonely struggles, or the brilliant, temperamental Meyerhold, or the 'dear restless fidget' Mandelshtam with his poetic image of the times which Ehrenburg envied him—a tremendous, clumsy, creaking swing of the helm. The earth is in full sail. . . .'

That Ehrenburg is performing a useful function in his own country was made only too clear by the attack Mr. Khrushchov delivered on him in his speech of March 8. But western readers too will find these reminiscences a fascinating and important document, however disappointing in detail the book may be.

## THE BOLSHOI 'FROM THE INSIDE OUTWARDS'

**Peter Brinson**

**W**E do not have a Yuri Slonimsky in Britain, by which I mean that the writers and critics in our ballet world stand more apart as a group from the creative and academic side of ballet than is the case in the Soviet Union. We know Slonimsky's name best in this country from among the large corps of Soviet ballet writers because he is a critic and historian of distinction. But he is also the author of nearly a dozen scenarios from which ballets have

been created on Soviet stages, and is not alone in being on both sides of the curtain in this way. Many other Soviet critics are former dancers or teachers.

The FLPH's revised and enlarged edition of his *The Bolshoi Ballet*, \* originally published in connection with the Bolshoi's 1956 London season, therefore looks at its subject from the inside outwards in the manner of a dancer or choreographer rather than in the detached way fashionable among British critics. It is an approach particularly suitable for the new material on the repertoire, dancers and æsthetic precepts of the Bolshoi today which Slonimsky has added to make this edition a more useful, as well as a larger, version of his original book.

Unfortunately the form does not always live up to the content. I like to think that the rather dry, jerky style is due to the translation. Yet the writing for the most part also lacks the colour and imagery so necessary and rare in talking about ballet, a lack surprising in someone who is poet enough to compose ballet scenarios. Occasionally, too, there are panegyrics of Soviet ballet which have not been confirmed entirely by what one's eyes have seen at Covent Garden.

Yet these are forgivable defects in a work which can add something to every ballet library. His account of the development of the Moscow ballet from 1773, when what is now the great Bolshoi company began as a ballet class at the Moscow Orphanage, ought to be required reading for all young dancers. It illustrates so well the characteristics which the Moscow school has given first to Russian ballet and now to Soviet ballet. It helps to fill the gap in our knowledge of all those years in the nineteenth century for which history books in English have given the impression that the progress of ballet was centred almost exclusively in Paris and Milan.

Slonimsky's account is informed, too, by a coherent view of history even if much remains for all historians to do in examining the technique and æsthetics of ballet in relation to society and in an international, rather than a national context. Occasionally he seems to me to take a too narrow view, or at least one which concentrates too exclusively on his subject. It is true, for example, that romantic ballet introduced, as Slonimsky puts it, 'a new hero into the system of ballet imagery—the people', but this was not especially true of *Russian* romantic ballet, nor particularly of Didelot, its greatest choreographer. It characterised all the best romantic choreography in Europe, from Dauberval to Perrot.

It is equally true that 'the 1890s were the years of ballet's florescence', of Chaikovsky's great scores, the best work of Petipa and Ivanov and the beginning of the work of Gorsky and Fokine. But it would surely have been even more true to point out that as the work of Petipa reached its height the ballet for which he stood was becoming fossilised into a formula against which Gorsky and Fokine rebelled, the one in Moscow and the other in St. Petersburg. The fundamental conflict which has influenced the development of ballet seems to me to lie in the conflict between ballet's aristocratic origins and language and the widening audience to which it must adapt this language if it is to live as an art. Petipa brought the ballet of his day to perfection for one type of audience. Fokine and Gorsky understood and sought to satisfy the needs of a different, much larger, audience which demanded admission to the art of ballet at the same time as it demanded, through the 1905 revolution, admission to the government of Russia with greater clarity than usual, the 'revolution' in ballet at this period was thus shown to be part of the larger social revolution.

We know a great deal about how Fokine answered this challenge and the changes he introduced upon which ballet in western Europe today is founded. We know much less about Gorsky, who played an equally important role in Russia itself up to 1924. By setting the record straight Slonimsky corrects our

\* *The Bolshoi Ballet*. Yuri Slonimsky. Second revised edition. (FLPH. 135 pp., including 173 illustrations. 17/6. Available from Central Books).



view of history and also indicates some of the different criteria, attitudes to tradition and the very different scale of ballet in the USSR compared with Britain and America.

It has become clear in reviews of Bolshoi performances that such differences are not sufficiently appreciated by critics in Britain, even if this failure is not entirely the fault of the critics. The Russians could learn a thing or two in public relations from the way the Danes transported the leading critics of Britain to Copenhagen in 1957 in order to show them the nature and characteristics of Danish ballet in its proper setting preparatory to introducing their ballet to the world. Rarely can such an investment in hospitality and air fares have paid such handsome dividends.

For the moment, however, misunderstandings and differences are acute. Partly, as pictures in Slonimsky's book emphasise, it is hard to judge a company seen at half size on the relatively restricted stage of Covent Garden. Partly, we have a long way to go to catch up with work done in the USSR on the aesthetics of ballet and on particular problems such as the adaptation of the classical heritage to today's needs, the relationship between form and content, the preparation of scenarios and libretti, and the vital question of what Slonimsky calls 'preparing the spectator for ballet'.

This does not mean that I agree with all that Slonimsky has to say in his final chapter 'Our point of view', where many of these questions are examined. The inadequate evidence of three short seasons by the Bolshoi and Kirov in London suggests, for instance, that content has considerably outstripped form in much Soviet choreography. But this chapter is immensely important because it tackles theoretical questions hardly touched upon in British ballet writing. What is *our* point of view? I doubt if we could answer this effectively because no one in Britain, excepting perhaps Arnold Haskell, has sat down to consider the aesthetics of British ballet as a whole.

A word, finally, about the book's enormous number of photographs. The historical pictures among them add a great deal to the text and to our understanding of the dancers who have made the Bolshoi what it is. A charming picture of Irakly Nikitin as Colas in *La Fille Mal Gardée* in the 1840s shows also a costume for the role in exquisite taste, whereas photographs of early years of this century equally help to bring the dancers alive but reveal settings which were evidently as lacking in taste in Russia as they were in the rest of Europe at the same time. More vital are the pictures of today's younger generation, not only those who have made such an impression here, like Timofeyeva and Bessmertnova among the women and the incredible group of men of whom Lavrovsky, Vasiliev, Yagudin and Sekh are only a few, but the new producers, teachers and administrators, among whom are former dancers like Ulanova and Yermolayev. One glance at such pictures shows the promise of the Bolshoi's future. Our ballet, too, is at a stage when well-loved faces are retiring and new ones are taking up their responsibility. The future will be the brighter for both of us the more we learn from each other, a truth with which no one, fortunately, agrees more firmly than dancers themselves. To this end *The Bolshoi Ballet* makes an immensely valuable contribution.

## THE PRINCIPLES OF CLASSICAL DANCE

Joan Lawson

THE LATE Agrippina Vaganova must rightly be called the founder of the Soviet school of classical dance. There is hardly a dancer in the USSR today who does not owe something, if not all, to her systematic analysis of the purely academic principles and movements through which they study

their great art of ballet. But her theoretical practice did not merely aim to produce the perfect technicians, capable of performing all the most difficult and spectacular steps of the dancer's vocabulary.

As a student she had studied under most of the leading teachers of the Mariinsky school, who can be placed into two categories: firstly those who were heirs to the grace and aristocratic manners of the old French school, to which the Swede Johansson had added something of the brilliant leaps and *batterie* of his master Bournonville; secondly, there was Cecchetti, the Italian, with his love of precision, carefully balanced attention to every section of the daily lesson, and insistence on the perfection of footwork. Under such guidance Vaganova became a brilliantly technical dancer with a living personality. But her inquiring mind was not satisfied with mere technical achievement. She became aware of the vital contribution the Russian dancers themselves made to the theatre, no matter in whose class or ballet they performed, and it was when working with Mikhail Fokine that she came to a full knowledge of her colleagues' understanding of the *cantilena* of movement, the essence of Russian dance in any vein.

Her self-appointed task became that of analysing and finding ways in which to develop this *cantilena* throughout her teaching when she was finally appointed to the staff of the Leningrad Choreographic School, now named after her. Her book, *The Principles of Classical Dance*,\* was the fruit of some twelve years' work, during which such great Soviet artists as Marina Semyonova, Olga Jordan, Galina Ulanova and Natalie Dudinskaya graduated from her classes. Their dancing was recognised by all the leading Soviet critics as the result of some highly specialised training which brought out the strongly individual qualities of each as an artist, gave them all a firm technique, and showed them all as mistresses of a new, purely Soviet style of classical dance. It was a style embracing above all the *cantilena* of all Russian dance, an element which can perhaps be interpreted as 'the generously expressive flow of movement as it sings with the music'.

The value of the first edition of Vaganova's book was recognised wherever the art of classical ballet is practised and translated into many languages. Her methods of teaching how to 'dance through and from the whole body' have been studied and applied by thousands of teachers, particularly in the USSR, where her system is that of every choreographic school. She herself recognised the need for continually amending and developing her work, and was engaged on a fourth edition of her book before she died. That edition has now been seen through the press by Vera Chistiakova, a colleague. It differs little fundamentally from the first, but every student practising classical dance will find that it differs greatly in finer details. There is some wonderful clarification of the steps and co-ordination of movement; and, most wonderful of all for those wishing to put her ideas into practice, there are examples of certain basic exercises in which any student of this great teacher will recognise the highly individual touches which made even a *plié* seem a thing of beauty and not a necessary adjunct to the preparation and completion of every step in the syllabus.

The book also contains several musical examples, which serve to show how much Vaganova believed in the powers of music to animate both the bodies and minds of her dancers.

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\* *The Principles of Classical Dance*. Agrippina Vaganova. Fourth edition. (Isskustvo Leningrad, 1963. 176pp., illustrated. Unpriced).

## CONTINUITY OF GENIUS

**The Russian Genius in Ballet.** A. L. Haskell.  
(Pergamon Press. 50pp. and 21 plates. 7/6.)

IT WILL be recalled that the Carmargo Society was founded by Arnold Haskell, Philip Richardson and Edwin Evans in 1930, after the death of Diaghilev and the disbanding of his company, to foster ballet in England while the Vic-Wells and Rambert companies were in their infancy. It is very appropriate that someone so closely concerned with keeping ballet alive in this country should now give us a short study on the continuity and growth of the Russian genius in ballet. Mr. Haskell rightly explains that fifty pages are quite inadequate for such a subject, and apart from a brief historical background this is a very personal interpretation of classical ballet as it has developed in Russia and evolved in the Soviet Union.

The book is divided into three main parts: the Imperial theatres and the direct continuation into Soviet ballet and Diaghilev in western Europe—the last named being what people in western Europe used to regard as Russian ballet although, as Haskell makes clear, it was something which had never been seen in Russia.

Fokine's five principles for the creation of a ballet are quoted in full, and later in the book a suggestion is made that Alexander Gorsky (1900-24), who had also revolted against Petipa's style of presenting ballet and moved to Moscow, produced results very akin to those of Fokine. One does not always agree with Mr. Haskell's conclusions, and having recently seen several performances of Gorsky's *Swan Lake* by the Bolshoi Ballet I cannot agree that in this ballet 'the invention of the jester, the folk-inspired Russian romanticism of the last act (choreographed by Messerer) and the general heightening of the drama make an enormous impression, and more and more dramatic detail emerges as one sees further performances, detail strictly subordinated to the whole'. It may be that the production suffers from a lack of space in London, but to my mind the story-line is now practically non-existent and a newcomer to the ballet would, I consider, be utterly confused without the programme notes.

It is also incomprehensible to me why Nureyev's Albrecht should have been used as an example of a character in the round when discussing the Russians' insistence on realism and the influence of Stanislavsky on their performances. To suggest that Nureyev's admittedly theatrically effective character is of equivalent stature to any by Radunsky or Lapauri is extraordinary—to mention him at all when Ulanova's Giselle has lived is sacrilege.

However, these are criticisms of relatively minor points and must not be allowed to obscure the valuable contribution this book makes to our understanding of Soviet ballet. We are much too inclined to judge the very occasional performances seen in London by our own standards of what constitutes a good ballet, quite forgetting that in particular music, stage designing and even choreography are being created in Russia in a quite different environment from our own. Mr. Haskell, has, I consider, done much to dispel some of the misconceptions current today as to the aims and artistic approach the Russians have to their ballet.

G. M. COTTAM.

## TOLSTOY'S GREATEST

**Tolstoy's 'War and Peace': a study.** R. F. Christian. (OUP. 184pp. 25/-.)

RECENT YEARS have seen the publication of numerous general surveys of Tolstoy's life and works in Russian and English. The need now is for studies like the present book, which concentrates on a more detailed analysis of individual works.

This by no means large volume contains a wealth of material, for Prof. Christian's stated aim, which has been successfully carried out, was 'to raise as many problems as possible and to illustrate them very briefly, but not to give an exhaustive, or even remotely exhaustive, treatment of any one of them'.

The book is divided into six sections—'The Evolution of the Novel', 'Use of Sources', 'Idea and Genre', 'Structure and Composition', 'Language', and 'Characterisation'—all of which are packed with illuminating information, analysis and suggestions supported by careful argument. In the first (and longest) section, for example, by showing that a number of the battle scenes were written as early as 1863 the author undermines the popular thesis that *War and Peace* was originally planned as a family chronicle and only later developed into a national epic.

This same section has most interesting pages on Tolstoy's revision of his work. The knowledge that the novelist's wife copied out seven or more successively revised versions of *War and Peace* has always served to modify that impression of an unceasing flow of immense artistic energy made on the reader by the finished product. Prof. Christian's study brings into sharper focus a sample of the many problems with which Tolstoy had to grapple: the difficulties he experienced in opening his novel (he made a dozen or so false starts), in introducing his main characters and in establishing their

personalities and relationships. Also discussed here are various stylistic changes.

The sections 'Structure and Composition', 'Use of Sources' and 'Characterisation' shed further light, from different angles, on Tolstoy's method of working and on his attitude to his material.

The short section on language will be especially revealing to those who know *War and Peace* only in English. The author emphasises aspects of Tolstoy's language (such as his use of repetition, his unorthodox grammar and syntax, his use of French, and his command of the idioms of various social strata) which are generally lost in translation, although they are consciously employed for definite ends in the original.

Occasionally Prof. Christian takes issue with Soviet critics of Tolstoy, most sharply over their tendency to interpret the book chiefly in terms of class and country. His own account of the central ideas of *War and Peace* is very satisfying.

Much of the material which the author has drawn on (and he has cast his net widely) is available only in Russian—and then nowhere collected together in such a compact form. Certainly no work in English rivals this careful and stimulating book as a study of Tolstoy's greatest novel. It is to be hoped that Prof. Christian will follow the present book with a similar study of *Anna Karenina*.

D. J. RICHARDS.

## PEASANTS IN TURMOIL

**Let the Blood of Man Not Flow.** Mikhailo Stelmakh. (FLPH. 326pp. 6/-. Available from Central Books.)

SET IN the Ukraine in the year 1920, this novel of the civil war and revolution gives a vivid picture of the complex human and political forces in what is too often thought of as a simple struggle of poor peasants against landlords.

Both the positive and negative aspects of Ukrainian nationalism are dealt with in a fully rounded fashion which might not have been possible some years ago. The characters are all seen in depth, and the minor ones hit off with great economy and telling dialogue. Grandad Nikodim, '... glasses on nose ... reading the Bible ...' is sympathetically observed, and the tortuous fashion in which he reaches substantially correct estimates of people and events through a maze of scriptural authority is amusingly described.

The quality of the translation is good, but some of the dialogue rings strangely—'... a mettlesome chap as sturdy as an acorn ...'

I have an idea that this problem of putting peasant dialogue into English is one of the most difficult of all. It is more than a century since there was a true English peasantry, and there is no equivalent today for peasant speech and turn of phrase. A book with such

a background therefore inevitably loses more in translation than it deserves to. This could usefully be the subject of some research and investigation among literary scholars and translators.

D. C. WALLIS.

## COMPLEX EMPEROR

**Peter the Great, Emperor of All Russia.** Ian Grey. (Hodder and Stoughton. 505pp., illus. 35/-.)

MR. GREY here provides us with a straightforward, well-documented history of the life of Peter the Great based on a large number of sources, Russian and other. The result of these researches into the work of Solovlev, Bogoslovsky, Klyuchevsky, Ustryalov and others is an account in some detail of Peter and his efforts for Russia. The author, moreover, has the merit of making his standpoint clear at the start. He states that the view that '... Peter merely continued, although at a much accelerated rate, the process inherited from his immediate predecessors is in my view unacceptable'. He also holds that Russia is part of Europe.

The book itself is well produced, though there are some defects. The map, for instance, has a number of place-names spelt differently from the usage in the text. It also contains the curious abomination of the 'Osmanic Empire'. The diagrams of battles are not always located in the chapters to which they refer. The index, too, in some ways is inadequate and amounts to little more than an index to place and personal names. Items such as administration, finance, gentry, taxation and territorial changes are not included, although dealt with in the text.

In fact, Mr. Grey's history tends to be largely political and military, rather than social and economic. This is so even though he devotes two chapters specifically to reform in state and church and to social and economic reforms. There is, of course, no inherent virtue in any one form of history. All have their part to play in contributing to our understanding of previous societies. The trouble seems to be, however, that in attempting to deal with the history of Peter the Great one has almost to be a polymath to attempt to encompass all aspects of his activities. Peter was personally engaged in international politics, military and ecclesiastical affairs, building a navy, creating supplies for his forces, organising recruits, taxation, supervising the training of officers and men, introducing a newspaper, checking translations, seeing that schools were set up, building a new capital and developing foreign trade, as well as trying to establish an efficient government. To try to see some pattern in Peter's many and widely varied activities is necessary to help us to grasp his full importance.

To see a pattern in the welter of Peter's actions is extremely difficult, partly because there are so many of them in so many fields, partly because Peter himself was always prepared to modify his views. Mr. Grey has succeeded well in conveying the range and complexity of Peter's activities. But, perhaps largely because the social and economic aspects of the reign are out of balance, the overall pattern remains obscure; and Mr. Grey's own views on Russia being part of Europe, and Peter being an innovator rather than a continuer, also remain bare statements, not explicitly underpinned by arguments derived from the mass of evidence he has adduced.

R. E. F. SMITH.

## GUIDE TO THE HERMITAGE

**Art Treasures of the Hermitage.** L. Voronikhina. (State Hermitage Publishing House. 174pp., illus. Unpriced.)

IMAGINE THE London National Gallery, British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum rolled into one, and you will realise the scope of the Leningrad Hermitage. Of its four buildings, the Winter Palace, built by Rastrelli in the middle of the eighteenth century, is the largest, and, as a residence of the tsars, least adapted after the revolutions to show pictures—often hanging in two rows inadequately lit by period chandeliers, with period armchairs for the public to sit in.

This latest official guide, published in 1961 and written in good English, is by one of the 200 historians and art historians working at the Hermitage research centre.

After introductory chapters dealing with the history of the collection and the buildings, the subject is divided into summary description of the exhibits of departments at present open to the public, the Numismatics Department being in process of rearrangement. It is interesting to note that exactly one half of the book is devoted to the Department of the History of West European Art, comprising eight schools—Italian, Spanish, Netherlandish, Flemish, Dutch, German, British and French. The last has been enriched by the transfer from Moscow in 1948 of a part of the famous modern collections of Schukin and Morozov.

The Hermitage is not a gallery of Russian painting except for portraits in the Gallery of the Patriotic War of 1812. The State Museum of Russian Art in Leningrad is the place for Russian and Soviet Russian pictures. Abstract work by Malevitch and others of 1910-30 are stored at the Hermitage and can be seen on application. But to call the Hermitage a non-Russian museum is somewhat of an exaggeration on the part of some art historians, seeing that three of the six departments now open consist of treasures of pre-Russian, Russian and Soviet culture. The tapestries, textiles, weapons, ivories,

silver, pottery, porcelain and furniture found in the burial mounds of the Voronezh province and in Siberia (Altai), not to mention the exquisite Scythian art of the sixth century B.C. and the material vestiges of culture and art of the peoples of Central Asia from the third millennium B.C. to the mid-nineteenth century and of the peoples of the Caucasus from the tenth century BC to the eighth century AD, to be seen in thirty-eight rooms of the Departments of the History of Primitive Culture and of Culture and Art of the People of the Soviet East are complemented with fifty-five rooms of the Department of the History of Russian Culture, containing *objets d'art* from the seventh century AD to the mid-nineteenth century. The culture and art of Byzantium from the fourth to fifteenth centuries have particular filiation with Russia, and represent perhaps the finest collection in existence. It is to be found in the Department of the History of Culture and Art of the Peoples of the Foreign Countries of the East, covering Egypt, Iran, Syria, Turkey, China, India and Japan. Finally, the Department of the History of Culture and Art of the Antique World—i.e. of ancient Italy (Rome) and Greece—possesses some archaeological material brought to light by excavations on the north coast of the Black Sea.

To a foreign visitor making his first, and perhaps only, call at the Hermitage this English guide is as indispensable as the unique *Catalogue of the Paintings in the Department of Western Art*, published by the director of the Hermitage Museum, M. Levinson-Lessing, in 1958, is to the historian of western art.

S. OSIAKOVSKI.

## EVOLUTIONARY EDUCATION

**Communist Education.** Twelve contributors, ed. Edmund J. King. (Methuen. 309pp. 25/-.)

**Educational Psychology in the USSR.** Ed. Brian and Joan Simon. (Routledge and Kegan Paul. 283pp. 40/-.)

THE SYMPOSIUM of articles on communist education is valuable because it is up to date and is a sincere presentation of varied non-communist viewpoints written by British, Canadian and West Indian educationists who have had direct contact with Soviet schools and teachers. I shall not deal with the chapters on other countries—the GDR, China and Poland.

Dr. King's emphasis tends to be on indoctrination and the reduction of the mass of school children to 'patient docility' (p. 15), while Dr. Katz tends to lean over backward to find all possible common ground (e.g. 'Political practice, if considered in the context of the process of socialisation, is seen to be identical in both types of society'). The book includes chapters on educational psychology, Russian children at



home and at school, the traditional and distinctive in Soviet education, the role of teachers, selection, the polytechnical principle, and higher education.

The author of the chapter on selection and differentiation seems determined to prove that educational equality of opportunity does not exist. He judges by the expression on the faces of Soviet teachers that they *do* believe in innate abilities and therefore, presumably, in streaming. He says somewhat vaguely that boarding schools 'might in fact be an instrument of a certain kind of selection' (p. 149). An editor's note on page 143 tells that some intelligence tests were introduced in September 1962, according to an unnamed leading Soviet educator. Other chapters are more factual and less carping, notably chapter 5 on 'The Role, Status and Training of Teachers in the USSR', by Miss A. A. Adams, and chapter 8 on 'Higher Education', by Professor C. L. Wrenn.

However, in the many comparisons between Soviet and western systems, including praise and criticism of features in both, certain positive points of great value emerge: the flexibility and constant evolutionary process of the Soviet structure (p. 123); the stress on the high status of women and teachers (p. 112); the fact that there is no lack of teachers or candidates for training (pp. 145, 296). It is conceded on page 294 that 'higher education in communist society is economically feasible for all who have the ability, a condition which does not apply in western societies to anywhere near the same extent'. The progress in polytechnisation is described on page 116 as 'a magnificent experiment of linking schools with work'.

*Educational Psychology in the USSR* is a collection of translated articles, mostly published in the last five years, by eminent Russian psychologists, providing material extremely valuable to teachers and students. It deals first with more general aspects of the psychology of learning, and goes on in Part III to discuss problems in more detailed fields, such as reading, the mastery of scientific concepts, poor ability in mathematics, and combination of verbal and visual methods. The introduction is clear and useful, and though the book is stiff reading it does help us to understand how Soviet psychologists and teachers are working together to make a success of unstreamed schooling. Where ability does not seem to measure up to the standards the country needs, science must be set to work to raise the ability. There must be no shrugging of shoulders, no writing off of the apparently slow or backward, no acceptance of fixed limits of attainment.

It is a pity that in such a well-produced and well-documented book there should be inaccuracies on page xi (Abbreviations), where there are several references to the *Akademia Pedagogicheskii* (instead of *Pedagogicheskikh*)

# A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO RUSSIAN STRESS

JAMES FORSYTH

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*Nauk*—a small detail, but it sticks out like a sore thumb to a reader with a knowledge of Russian.

C. E. SIMMONDS.

Note: *Educational Psychology in the USSR* will be the subject of a longer review in a coming number of the SCR *Soviet Information Library*—Ed.

## PHYSICAL CULTURE IN THE USSR

**A History of Physical Culture.** V. V. Stolbov and I. G. Chudinov. (Moscow, 1962. 207pp. 47 kop.)

THIS BOOK is produced under the auspices of the Central Council of the Union of Sports Societies and Organisations of the USSR as a textbook for students training to become teachers of physical education. It is well to bear this in mind and not to expect too much from the rather broad title.

The book is divided into two parts, the first dealing with 'The History of Physical Culture in Foreign Countries' and the second entitled 'The History of Physical Culture in the USSR' (though it is actually more than that). Part I is a very rapid sketch from ancient Greece to the post-war modern world, and will not be of any real value to readers with access to English and American publications of a much more thorough nature. It is given a Marxist slant with the recurrent theme that physical culture under capitalism aims at preparing 'soldiers for predatory war' and detracting youth 'from the political fight' (p. 4). Even the Boy Scout movement is classed as 'one of the methods of the physical and military training of youth' (p. 47).

The greater proportion of the text (about two-thirds) is devoted to Part II, which is again subdivided into two sections. The first gives an outline history of physical culture in Russia from the mid-sixth century to the October revolution in 1917; while the second covers the period of Soviet rule. Both sections are most useful in that they bring together information which formerly had to be gleaned from a number of separate publications. Although this material has necessarily been very much condensed, it is still possible to obtain an overall and accurate picture of the development that has taken place, culminating in the present-day comprehensive state system of physical culture. The section on the Soviet Union relates the history of physical culture to the general political history, and is well documented with reference to Party resolutions on physical culture and sport.

There are a number of questions on which more might have been said, such as finance, teacher training, the work in schools, the difficulties encountered—but it is always easy to see the omissions. The book is very clearly

printed, with numerous sub-titles and a summary at the end of each chapter, which helps to make amends for the usual absence of an index. A bibliography would be an asset for readers outside the USSR.

D. T. SULLIVAN.

## CONCRETE FOR EXPERTS

**Reinforced Concrete.** E. Sigalov and S. Strongin. (FLPH. 393pp., illus. 15/-, Available from Central Books and Collet's.)

IT is a thousand pities that this fine book has not been translated by an engineer whose mother tongue is English. This must regretfully be said because the translation severely limits the number of people who can profit by reading it. The translation can be understood by a competent, experienced concrete engineer, and such a person can appreciate the authors' sophisticated outlook. They have read, studied and learnt much, and used to the full the large research facilities of their country.

Since the language of the book is not English but 'translatorese', the book cannot be recommended to the student engineer because it would cause misunderstandings, and would in any case bring unnecessary labour to his work.

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It is nevertheless fascinating reading to the experienced structural designer. Concrete practice in the USSR is very different from that in any western country, as might be expected. The fantastically fast increase of precast building construction seems to have been made possible, in part, by rigid, highly economical standardisation enforced on a scale that is occasionally approached in western countries, but only in war-time.

Standardisation of factory spans in multiples of six metres evidently saves much labour, not only in structural calculations but also in the casting yard.

The authors work through reinforced concrete theory, giving numerical values to practically every one of the awkward unknowns in concrete and giving design methods for all the standard members, including combined bending and direct stress, and redistribution of bending moments, with more emphasis on precast work than is usual here. Complete designs are worked out for foundations, beam and slab floors, flat slab floors, single-story factory frames and the loading of a multi-story frame, and there is a short introduction to shells, curved or folded.

To the concrete designer who is interested in precasting, this book is excellent value with its nearly 200 diagrams and 400 pages of text, including many valuable tables.

JOHN S. SCOTT.

## DRAWING IN ENGLISH

**Mechanical Drawing.** A. Sorebryakov, K. Yankovsky and M. Pleshkin. (FLPH. 183pp., illus. 12/6. Available from Central Books.)

THIS BOOK was produced for a school in the Soviet Union where the children are following all their educational programme in a foreign language, in this case English. As a development in education this is in itself interesting, but it does mean that the programme of the school is planned to be a parallel to the ordinary school curriculum and therefore the textbooks will bear some similarity to those used elsewhere, even when they are not straight translations of the books used by other schools.

In the circumstances it is not possible to criticise the language or content purely as a book on the subject produced in Britain, although they are of comparable standard. Indeed, there are similarities between this book as a production and others produced

by a well-known educational publishing house here.

This is a very good book for the beginner, and will take him quite a long way along the road. It approximates to our 'O' level GCE at the end. But having said this it must also be said that it carries the marks of a foreign production: the type is a little heavy and the photo-copying process gives a gloomy impression of its pictures. The diagrams are good and convey all the processes and constructions necessary for a student to go through the book on his own. Translations such as 'worker-rationaliser' and 'worker-inventor' would be better written as 'work-study experts' and 'inventors.' It is confusing to have the term 'frontal projection' used for our oblique projection *and* front elevation. If the object really is to use the English idiom there surely can be no objection to our equivalent.

The book keeps its feet firmly on the ground in the workshop, and it may be that by our standards the geometry is rather neglected. However, it is fair to say that there are few textbooks that have everything except where they are in several parts. The authors have set themselves a target and achieved it well.

R. B. BASTIN.

## READABLE SCIENCE READER

**Russian Popular Science Texts: Biology, Medicine.** R. V. Grigorenko. (Moscow. 295pp. 5/-. Available from Collet's.)

A CHATTY, readable text composed of short articles and extracts on both general biology and medicine. It should be useful for biologists and all workers in the field of medicine and medical science who are learning Russian. There is a useful vocabulary of some ninety pages, which deals not only with specialised words, but with all those used in the text. This little book could therefore be used as a primary reader by a science worker in the field instead of the more orthodox readers. It has the double advantage of familiarising him at the same time with contemporary Soviet and classical Russian work in these branches of science.

There are a few words of curious jargon, e.g. 'organoidness', which are better discarded, but this is a minor defect.

The price is not indicated, nor is the date of publication, but the book refers to the fact that in 1961 there were 380,000 doctors in the Soviet Union.

B. KIRMAN.

## FOR STUDENTS OF RUSSIAN

**Exercises in Russian Syntax: Compound and Complex Sentences.** V. S. Belevitskaya-Khaliseva et al. (FLPH. 334pp. Unpriced.)

**T**HIS is the second volume of a book on Russian syntax, intended for English-speaking students.

Like the first volume, reviewed in these pages last year (and as it states in the preface), it is not for beginners. Also like the first volume, it is useful mainly as a source of examples and constructions. A thorough scrutiny of the exercises might well help the student engaged on prose composition and also the teacher seeking pronouncements on the regular difficulties of syntax, for example the tense sequence in subordinate clauses. Its main fault is that it confines itself too narrowly to being a collection of exercises. What exposition of the principles of sentence structure there is is relegated to footnotes, written, moreover, in rather rebarbative English. As in volume one, as much space is given to grammatical questions which cause the English-speaker little difficulty as to those which constantly confuse him.

More attention to the specific needs of the English-speaker, or just—since the same material is probably intended for various nationalities, this being but the English edition—less conformity to the type of exposition designed for Russians themselves, would have made the book so much better.

A. G. WARING.

**Russian As We Speak It.** S. Khavronina. (Collet's. 219pp. 3/6 and 7/6.)

**Learn Russian Quickly.** David Callender. (MacGibbon and Kee. 230pp. 21/-)

**S**TUDENTS AND teachers of Russian alike will have a warm welcome for *Russian as We Speak It* with its 200 pages tightly packed with useful, practical and helpful material. It is devised to help the lone student struggling with the problem of learning Russian on his own as well as one working with a teacher. It will also prove very helpful to the teacher, especially if he is not a native or is out of touch with the Soviet Union.

It consists of twenty-one lessons, each comprising a reading passage and a set of dialogues on the theme of the passage, followed by extensive notes and exercises. The lessons are arranged gradually in order of increasing difficulty and are illustrated with photographs.

The reading passages are all concerned with everyday subjects, practical matters illustrating all aspects of daily life in the Soviet Union. The dialogues attached to them are especially useful, as they are all in an ordinary colloquial language, so often missed and misunderstood by a student who has never come into contact with Russians. There are also lists of idioms which are in constant use in ordinary conversation, know-

ledge of which is essential in order to understand and hold a conversation. Another point of great value is the key provided at the end, by means of which a student can correct his exercises.

The book is fully stressed throughout, and a comprehensive Russian-English vocabulary is provided. At 3/6 it is very good value.

*Learn Russian Quickly*, a little book bound in an original way, narrow and long, can easily be carried in the pocket or handbag, and can be used at a moment's notice at any time—while travelling to or from work, or on a Sunday outing. The illustration of St. Basil's Cathedral on the front cover, in tones of mauve, is most attractive and catches the eye. The print is large and clear and the paper pleasantly thick.

It is one of a series of modern language books claiming to present living languages in a simpler and more practical way. It promises the prospective student that he will be able to start talking to Russians and reading their periodicals after studying the twenty-eight lessons into which the book is divided.

The sixty-six sections begin by explaining Russian writing, the first exercises being given in longhand. Grammar is cut to a minimum. Conversation is encouraged. Words are grouped according to subjects, which are simple everyday ones. It aims at giving material which may prove useful to the prospective tourist in hotels, restaurants, and trains. It also purports to give some information about the Soviet Union.

A good point is the stress on the clear formation of letters when learning to write. Another is the simple explanation of unavoidable grammatical rules. It is stressed, and there are attempts at explaining pronunciation.

Some of the claims may be exaggerated, but the merit of such an approach to learning the language is that it reassures the student and encourages further study.

The price seems high, which is probably due to its attractive appearance.

IRINA TIDMARSH.

**The Gateway Russian Course,** I. F. F. Seeley, H. Rapp. (Methuen. 283pp., illus. 21/-.)

**Ivan and Katya.** G. Davydoff and P. Pauliat, adapted by F. G. Gregory. (Harrap. 237pp., illus. 15/-.)

**T**WO UNIVERSITY lecturers are the authors of the *Gateway Course*, the first part of a course intended to take children to GCE 'O' level in two years. In view of the hard work which has obviously gone into it, it is unfortunate that the writers did not acquaint themselves firstly with what material is suitable for children and secondly with methods of teaching languages in schools as opposed to universities.

Only an over-disciplined or completely

lifeless class would attempt to translate the following into Russian without loud protest or cynical laughter: 'Daddy will take his violin; you know he plays the violin beautifully. He will play for us, and we will dance in the woods'. Most passages, however, both English and Russian, are so unnatural and uninteresting that they would evoke neither protest nor laughter—just boredom.

While the material underestimates the children's maturity, the author's teaching method overestimates it. This explanation, for example, would scarcely be comprehensible to an undergraduate, let alone a thirteen-year-old school child: 'In questions the order may be that of the statement or the pivotal element may be moved to the head of the question'.

An even greater fault is that none of the exercises is designed to train the child to express himself immediately in Russian, since they consist either of translation passages written in unnatural English or of gap

fillers ('Put the bracketed verbs into the past tense', etc.).

Even with the most lively teacher in the world, the children studying from this book will succeed only in speaking (slowly) a curious, almost pidgin, form of Russian.

*Ivan and Katya* has obviously been written by school-teachers with a sound knowledge of children.

It consists of well-graded, attractive comprehension passages, explanations, questions and exercises. If used by a good teacher it should give pupils a fluency in Russian (within limited fields, of course) and take them up to GCE 'O' level.

The book does not use Russian or describe the country as it was fifty years ago. Some of the material has been taken from Soviet sources (the Tass report on the first manned space flight, conversation between the astronaut and Moscow), while many of the excellent illustrations are of Russian life today.

GLYN JOHN.

## TECHNICAL DICTIONARIES

**Russian-English Chemical and Polytechnical Dictionary.** L. I. Callahan. Second edition. (John Wiley and Sons, London and New York, 1962. 892pp. 147/-.)

**Anglo-russkii slovar' po khimii i pererabotke nefii.** V. V. Kedrinsky. (Gosneftizdat, Leningrad, 1962. 910pp. Available from Collet's.)

**Anglo-russkii politechnicheskii slovar'.** Ed. A. E. Chernukhin. (Fizmatgiz, Moscow, 1962. 664pp. 50/-). Available from Collet's.)

**Anglo-russkii slovar' po gazoturbinnym ustanovkam s prilozheniem alfavitnogo ukazatelya russkikh terminov.** I. N. Nartov. (Sudpromgiz, Leningrad, 1962. 215pp. 12/6. Available from Collet's.)

**Anglo-russkii i russko-angliiskii arkhitekturno-stroitel'nyi slovar'.** L. S. Yampolsky (ed.), V. I. Pushkarev and A. M. Shchegoleva. (Gosstroizdat USSR, Kiev, 1961. 842pp. 35/-). Available from Collet's.)

**Smeiyazychnyi slovar' po elektronike i volnovodam.** B. G. Bargin, A. S. Buchinsky. (Fizmatgiz, Moscow, 1961. 263pp. 17/6. Available from Collet's.)

IN THE first post-war years the shortage of good scientific Russian-English and English-Russian dictionaries was keenly felt. Ludmilla Callahan's Russian-English

chemical dictionary established itself as an extremely useful volume and by far the best in its field. Now Mrs. Callahan has revised her work, filling in many of the gaps and improving it as a working tool for translators of Soviet scientific literature.

A comparison of the list of sources and references in the 1947 and 1962 editions shows the progress that has been made in recent years with the immense enlargement of the scale of translation from the Russian, and the active programme of Soviet publishing houses in producing foreign-language dictionaries. Some of the recent ones added to the SCR Library are listed above.

The Russian index in Nartov's gas turbine dictionary and the list of Russian words in the seven-language dictionary of electronics and waveguides (based on Elsevier's six-language dictionary) make these Anglo-Russian dictionaries workable Russian-English ones, which usefully supplement Callahan for the more specialised terms in their fields. The Russian-English section of the architectural dictionary, while slighter than the English-Russian part, is also a useful supplement to Callahan, giving further synonyms for many terms as well as containing words not given by her.

H.C.C.



## SOME RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE SCR LIBRARY

**B**OOKS in many fields—education, geography, history, science and the arts, as well as novels, plays, poetry and literary history and criticism—are constantly being added to the SCR Library. It is not possible at the present time to produce accession lists for all members. In future, however, we will publish a selected list of recent additions in the *ANGLO-SOVIET JOURNAL* for the benefit of members who cannot get in frequently to the library. A short list of titles added in the past three months follows:

- Lyubov' Zabashta. *Pesnya i khleb*. Stikhi. Avtor. perevod s ukrainskogo Sov. Pisatel'. 1962.
- Mikh. Zenkevich. *Skvoz'. grozy, let*. Stikhi. Goslitizdat. 1962.
- Mark Lisyanskii. *Zdravstvui.* Novaya kniga stikhotvorenii. Sov. Pisatel'. 1962.
- Vladimir Lifshitz. *Klyukva v sakhare*. Satificheskie 8 yumoricheskije stikhi, rasskazi, parodii. Sov. Pisatel'. 1963.
- Andrei Malyshko. *Stikhi i poemy*. Perevod s ukrainskogo. Goslitizdat. 1962.
- Vladimir Soloukhin. *Imeyushchii v rukakh tsvety*. Sov. Pisatel'. 1962.
- Nikolai Starshinov. *Lirika*. Stikhi i poemy. Sov. Pisatel'. 1962.
- Leonid Tyomin. *Da i net*. Stikhi. Sov. Pisatel'. 1962.
- K. Paustovskii. *Sobranie sochinenii*. Goslitizdat. 1958.
- Elena Rzhetskaya. *Zemnoe prityakhenie. Povest'*. Sov. Pisatel'. 1963.
- Dmitro Tkach. *Arena*. Roman. Perevod s ukrainskogo. Molodaya gvaria. 1963.
- Ivan Shevtsov. *Svet ne bez dobrykh lyudei*. Roman. Moskovskii rabochii. 1962.
- Boris Yampolskii. *Molodoi chelovek. Povets'*. Sov. Pisatel'. 1963.
- U nasy Leningrade*. O primetakh vremeni. Sbornik. Sov. Pisatel', Leningrad. 1961.
- Ignatii Dvoretiskii. *P'esy*. Sov. Pisatel'. 1963.
- Moskovskii Khudozhestvennyi teatr v sovet-skuyu epokhu*. Materialy i dokumenty. pod red. A. Solodovnikogo. Iskusstvo. 1962.
- G. Kryzhitskii. *Velikii reformator stseny*. Sov. Rossiya. 1962.
- P. V. Simonov. *Metod K. S. Stanislavskogo i fiziologiya emotsii*. Izd-vo AN SSSR. 1962.
- Vi. Prokofiev. *V sporakh o Stanislavskom*. Iskusstvo. 1962.
- V. Lashkin. *Lev Tolstoi i A. Chekhov*. Sov. Pisatel'. 1963.
- M. Gus. *Idei i obrazy F. M. Dostoevskogo*. Goslitizdat. 1962.
- Kornei Chukovskii. *Masterstvo Nekrasova*. Izd-e 4-oe. Goslitizdat. 1962.
- B. I. Kolesnikov. *Revolucionnaya estetika P. B. Shelli*. Byshaya Shkola. 1963.
- Sistema esteticheskogo vospitaniya v detskom sadu*. Pod red. N. A. Vetlyuginoi. Izd-vo APN RSFSR. 1962.
- Voprosy psikhologii uchebnoi deyatel' nosti mladshikh shkol 'nikov*. Pod red. D. B. El 'konina i V. V. Davydova. Izd-vo APN RSFSR. 1962.
- Nauka i chelovechestvo*. 1962. Znanie. 1962.
- Russkii fol'klar*. Materialy i issledovaniya. Tomy I- VI, Izd-vo AN SSSR. 1956-1961.
- E. V. Tarle. *Sochineniya*. Tomy I-XII Izd-vo AH SSSR. 1957-1962.
- B. D. Grekov. *Izbrannye trudy*. Tomy I-IV. 1957-1960.
- F. P. Filin. *Obrazovanie yasyka vostochnykh slavyan*. Izd-vo AN SSSR. 1962.
- V. P. Beseduna-Nevzorova. *Staro-slavyanskii yazyk*. Izd-vo Kharkovsogo Universiteta. 1962.
- N. M. Zorkaya. *Sovetskii istoriko-revolucionnyi film*. Izd-vo AN SSSR. 1962.
- I. A. Azovskii Oblastnoi (kraevoi) Sovet deputatov trudyashchikhsya. Gosyurizdat. 1962.
- V. S. Pronina. *Rol' mestnykh Sovetov v dele preduprezhdeniya pravonarysheanii nesovershennoletnikh*. Gosyurizdat. 1961.

# AN EXHIBITION ON SOVIET EDUCATION

C. B. Holliday

**An example of the initiative of an SCR member using some of the services made available by the Society.**

ONE OF the problems of enlightening the public about Soviet life and culture is that of making the information readily available to large numbers of them without incurring heavy expenditure. It was with this in mind that I approached the librarian of the town library with a view to holding an exhibition in the gallery above the reading room. The request was favourably received, and the library committee and town council gave their approval for the exhibition to be held for a fortnight from March 9 to 23 inclusive.

The gallery measured approximately 48ft. x 30ft., and was furnished with glass-topped showcases standing against the wall. These served admirably for displaying photographs. A dozen screens each measuring 6ft. x 4ft. were hung on the walls, each of which displayed some specific feature of the educational system.

The exhibition was divided into two main sections, one showing in chronological order the general system of education from the nursery to the university; the other children's art, reading books, textbooks, exercise books, and a small section on the teaching of mathematics.

The first section occupied three of the walls and their respective showcases, and nearly 400 photographs were used to illustrate school life in its various stages from many parts of the Soviet Union. Also included in this section were photographs showing life at the boarding school, the children's home, pioneer camps and palaces, people's universities, and schools for ballet and music. Full imperial sheets (22in. x 32in.) giving the relevant descriptive matter were hung between the screens, and special articles from magazines and newspapers relating to School administration, teaching of the deaf and blind and cultural circles added to the general interest. Further illustrations included a timetable of the eight- and ten-year school, and a large chart showing the general pattern of the whole educational system.

The remaining wall space was devoted to children's art, which was kindly lent by the British-Soviet Friendship Society.

During the fortnight it was on display it was seen by nearly 1,200 people, and one of the most rewarding things was to note that the majority of these studied both photographs and texts with great thoroughness. Comments in the visitors book were made by 120 people, of whom more than half expressed their appreciation and made complimentary remarks without reservation. Adjectives such as 'very interesting', 'very good' and 'most enlightening' were commonplace; and remarks such as 'Let's have more of them', 'It makes one think', and 'I am a little less blind' were evidence of the reaction it had on some of the people. Approximately a quarter of the remarks expressed praise, doubt and sensible criticism. Of the remainder, one person thought that the only thing of interest was the visitors book; two just could not believe what they had seen; a few thought it was a misrepresentation of the true facts; and about half a dozen thought it was nothing more than propaganda.

In general the exhibition was well received by the press and the people. It aroused much interest and provoked both discussion and argument. To me it was a valuable experience, and I consider the effort to have been well worth while.

# YOUNG FILM MAKERS AND OLD

Ivan Pyriev

**T**HE FILM MAKERS of our country are now faced with an urgent problem—the eradication everywhere of the harmful effects of the Stalin cult. Each of us must unfetter his artistic perception to the full, free his mind and heart, ignore the fixed patterns and false canons of former years, and delve into the seething, complex life of our country. This must be constantly borne in mind, for it will help us to create and work with all our capability and talent.

It is noteworthy, however, that some of us are inclined to interpret the struggle against the survivals of the Stalin cult as a certain abandonment of control, as anarchy in Soviet cinema: 'I do as I like and film what I like.' Others even attempt to use the struggle against the cult for a combination of other purposes, or as an opportunity at last to infuse alien bourgeois tendencies into our art.

Some of our young artists remember the times of the Stalin cult very well, though they were only ten, twelve or fifteen years old then. They do not, however, seem to know anything about the splendid things being done in our country today, what the people and the Party have created in the years of Soviet power, what we had to begin with, and what we have achieved. They do not know that Russia was a ragged country, that the people lived in huts blackened with soot, that their stomachs were swollen with hunger, that their homes were lit with spills in the evenings, that they worked the land with wooden ploughs. All this and a great deal more seems to have escaped them altogether. They seem

## COMMUNIST EDUCATION

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Recent developments and present trends in Communist education are traced in this authoritative survey by specialists who have professionally studied and visited the U.S.S.R. and other Communist countries.

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This is the first survey to convey effectively the post 1958 story of re-orientation after the "Krushchev Reforms". Objective though it is, it imparts as vividly as possible the "inside view" which only the trained and practised observer can achieve.

to think that everything then was just as it is today, and that filming and all our art has begun for them only with the present.

Ignorance of the incredibly difficult and heroic path our people have travelled, of the inhuman conditions in which the backward, illiterate people in some of our national republics lived, and of how they live today, ignorance of our great victories and gains and of the fact that our country became the first country of victorious socialism, a mighty world power—this ignorance deprives some of our younger artists of high civic consciousness, pride and patriotism.

We have had films that could truly serve as shining examples of high civic consciousness not only for the younger generation but for our older film workers as well. We have had many such pictures. Some of them have been forgotten; I shall refer only to one which was made not so very long ago and which I regard as a real masterpiece of Soviet cinema. It was called *The Great Family*. This picture about the working class told the story of one family—the Zhurbins. And yet the scale of its narrative was tremendous. How many unique characters it portrayed, and each one so real!

I have mentioned this film because many of my friends and I are worried at the limitation and narrowness of some of our young film workers.

We are worried by their passive, dispassionate, ‘objective’ attitude to life, their yearning for small, superficial themes, or themes of the remote past, themes that possibly deserve attention but cannot constitute the main thing in the acute ideological struggle of our times.

I am worried most of all by the stubborn reluctance of a number of our young film workers—evidently because of timidity and uncertainty in their powers—to work on the major themes of our times, on the historic and revolutionary themes so important now.

Our young film makers should take boldly and determinedly to the greater themes of our life, for these will help them to grow and turn into great artists. Like real Soviet artists they must not reckon only with what they want to do and do not want to do, but must think of what is necessary and important for the people.

—*Pravda*, December 16, 1962.

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